NATIONAL IDENTITY AND MEDIA SYSTEM DEPENDENCY IN BELIZE

By

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This research, based on media dependency theory, examined associations between media exposure--dependency and feelings of national identity among young people in Belize, Central America. The researcher used a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from 424 students at six secondary schools. The survey measured exposure to and dependency on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and interpersonal sources of information.

Belize was chosen to test relationships between media and national identity because national independence and satellite-delivered U.S. television arrived almost simultaneously in 1981. The former British colony, where English is the official language, had no television industry at the time. The survey sample represented the first "television generation" in Belize.

Survey participants reported watching about four hours of U.S. television daily, but data analysis found no significant correlations between their television exposure and feelings of national identity.

Correlation analysis found a significant association between exposure to Belize magazines and national identity as measured on a 13-item "national identity index." Those with higher exposure to magazines published in Belize also were more likely to report stronger feelings of Belizean national identity.

Correlation analysis indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between strength of national identity and frequency of contact with friends or relatives living outside Belize. Those most likely to hear from people in other countries were most likely to evaluate Belize more positively, perhaps because interpersonal sources passed along news that made Belize look good by comparison.

A multiple regression model predicting strength of national identity feelings indicated that a survey participant's positive comparison of life in Belize with life in the United States was the most likely predictor of a strong national identity. The survey results indicate that exposure to some media and interpersonal information sources correlates with feelings of national identity in Belize.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This research examines associations between feelings of national identity and mass media exposure and dependency in the Central American nation of Belize. One goal is to determine if heavy users of foreign media such as the country's satellite-imported cable television feel less "Belizean" than their fellow citizens who rely less on imported television and more on local media for news and entertainment. In an age of worldwide satellite television, exploring some of the ways mass media may help build "global" rather than national or local identifications can have implications beyond the scope of this research.

In the situation described here, six key factors indicate a possible relationship between media and national identity: (1) Belize gained its independence from Great Britain in 1981, the same year U.S. television arrived in the country; (2) Belize has never had a national television service of its own; (3) the official language of Belize is English, the language of the U.S. programs coming into the country; (4) many Spanish-speaking Belizeans also watch television from Mexico; (5) "local" or Belizean television produces very little programming in comparison with the

available Mexican and U.S. programs; and (6) government efforts to build a "Belizean national identity" appear to clash with a very pervasive foreign television system.

Visual media have a history of serving political movements and building national loyalties. Leni Reifenstahl, the director of the 1935 Nazi documentary *Triumph of the Will*, said Adolph Hitler was the first national leader to realize that visual communication is particularly well suited to molding a "powerful national experience" (Barnouw, 1974, p. 103). In more modern times, a typical early goal of the organizers of a coup d'etat is a takeover of government television and radio stations. The belief shared by Hitler and many modern revolutionaries is that mass media can lend legitimacy to government.

At the time of its independence from Great Britain on September 21, 1981, the multiracial new nation of Belize was not likely to be mistaken for the Nazi Party's vision for Germany in 1935, but government leaders did have a clear vision of their national identity. The People's United Party (PUP) of Prime Minister George Price helped draft a constitution, write a national anthem, and design a national flag bearing the catchy Latin motto *sub umbra floreo*--"I flourish in the shade"--perhaps appropriate for a sweltering country whose main industries were timber and sugar cane. In September, 1981, government-operated Radio Belize and the nation's privately owned newspapers hailed independence and

free expression in a new Belize. The few television sets in Belize at the time all were tuned to stations in other countries. Belize had no national television service and no local stations to report on the event.

The former colony of British Honduras had developed the bare outlines of a plan for national television service as independence approached. The People's United Party (PUP), which would take control of the new nation, had promised television service by the date of the next elections, expected in 1984 (Brogdon, 1986). As promised by the PUP, television had arrived in Belize in 1984, but not as the government had hoped or predicted. Government plans to provide a national television service for the country's citizens had not materialized. The television voice of Belize throughout the 1980s carried an American accent, and it has remained overwhelmingly American to this day. In 1995, satellite services provided up to 54 channels--mostly American--on cable television systems in Belize City, and from 10 to 35 channels in most other parts of the country.

Statement of the Problem

The major goal of this study is to determine whether young people's sense of national identity in Belize is associated with media exposure and dependency. Belizeans listen to very popular government-affiliated radio stations and read a variety of heavily political weekly newspapers. American television is just one of the factors that may

affect media exposure and dependency because it may cause young people to spend less time with Belizean media. In addition, media exposure and dependency may have a very low association with national identity in Belize.

Perhaps the mere presence and popularity of U.S. television programs does not affect the national identity of Belizean audiences, who may enjoy U.S. programs without feeling that they are "alternative Americans." On the other hand, young Belizeans may become dependent upon their mostly American programs for socialization skills, information about their world, and an orientation to their place in the world. For example, one Canadian study found that young Canadians who spent more time with American television were more likely to perceive themselves as Americans and less likely to perceive themselves as Canadians (Barnett & McPhail, 1980). The stated problem in this research is measuring media exposure and dependency and determining their relationships to feelings of unity, national loyalty, and Belizean nationality, summed up as "national identity."

Many developing countries use the mass media to build loyalties to government and communicate with disparate ethnic or language groups. The history of U.S. television programs in Belize illustrates the importance of a rapid and responsive government policy to regulate mass media in a developing nation. Belize did not have a clear and enforceable television policy at the time of its

independence. The national government also could not make full use of its own media for national identity building because it was handicapped by a lack of money to finance a national television network. At a time when the newly independent nation was working to build a "Belizean" identity during the 1980s, practically all of its television programming was produced by a foreign country.

The Arrival of Belize Television

During the summer months of 1981, an American expatriate living in Belize City began selling program decoders for a television service that would rebroadcast satellite television from the United States. The first satellite service went out to only 24 families, but a dozen similar businesses popped up across Belize within the next five years (Lent, 1989). Satellite rebroadcasts of U.S. programming could reach about 75% of the population by the mid-1980s (Mahler, 1987). The rapid spread of satellite television coverage seemed to catch the government of Belize by surprise. While the Belizean government was engaged in nation building in the 1980s, entrepreneurs built a Central American broadcasting system serving up U.S. television.

With satellite dishes pirating U.S. network feeds and superstation broadcasts, young Belizeans became Chicago Cubs fans and enjoyed *Santa Barbara* and Los Angeles Lakers basketball. International television became part of the local culture of Belize. Within a dozen years of U.S.

television's arrival, a Belizean newspaper editorial complained that a school football match had been called off because several players had stayed home to watch a basketball playoff game on television (Wilk, 1993). A national debate got underway over the benefits and problems associated with U.S. television, and especially its potential influence on young people. That debate has posed some questions this research is designed to answer.

The first Prime Minister of Belize, PUP leader George Price, believed that a feeling of national identity was important in a new nation that included several ethnic and language groups. During campaign appearances, the charismatic Price evoked a "Central American destiny" (Fernandez, 1989, p. 60). Price served two terms as Prime Minister and lost twice to the opposition United Democratic Party (UDP) of current Prime Minister Manuel Esquivel.

Price, who claims he has never owned a television, is not enthusiastic about the medium's potential for improving Belizean society. He opposed a television service in the late 1970s, believing that television would show a world unattainable for the average Belizean. When his party endorsed a television service, he hoped it would be used for development journalism, education, and other services that would promote what he saw as the public good.

Price believes radio is an effective medium for the kind of communication that promotes nation building. He has

said he reads local newspapers and listens to radio to find out about national affairs (G. C. Price, personal communication, January 7, 1992). If Belizeans shared Price's dream of what their country should be, they might reject foreign television in favor of media products with a more nationalistic flavor, but Belizeans seem to enjoy both their national radio service and the window on the world provided by U.S. television. With an estimated television penetration of 75% by 1987, most Belizeans enjoyed daily U.S. television as well as the ubiquitous accents of Radio Belize in English, Spanish, and Creole.

National radio and television broadcasting give a country a "national voice" even if that voice includes a variety of ethnic and language programs, as Belizean national radio does. The two main sources of program material for television in Belize are the United States and Mexico, although Belizean material is beginning to be used. In 1995, some Belizean viewers could choose between two locally produced, half-hour evening newscasts reporting on events from around Belize.

Just how many Belizeans see these programs is not known, not even by the people who produce them. Audience survey techniques are quite unsophisticated in Belize. One television station's managing director who said he had done some public opinion polling in Belize reported having a "good idea" of how far his station's tower transmits

programs to the immediate area around Belize City, but no highly accurate estimates of total viewers (S. Krohn, personal communication, January 18, 1995).

Despite some increases in locally originated programs, the relatively small amount of television material produced within Belize represents a national television "voice" that at present is little more than a whisper. Channel 5 and Channel 7 in Belize City present daily half-hour newscasts, so the presence of "national" television is growing, but these newscasts cannot be received in all parts of Belize. Television is widely available, but the thousands of hours Belizean teenagers have spent watching television have been largely a journey outside their country and culture. Among the questions asked by this research is whether spending a great amount of time with foreign television weakens feelings of national identity by creating a "television identity" or cultural identity with another country.

Belize's "Television Generation"

Young people were chosen for this research because they are the first "television generation" in Belize as well as the first generation of post-colonial Belizeans. In this research, young people are defined as those between the ages of 12 and 21. Individuals in this age group face a decision about whether to stay in Belize or migrate to another country after completing their education because Belize

lacks a four-year, liberal arts university system and suffers from high unemployment among young people.

It is no exaggeration to state that this "television generation" will shape the future of Belize; an estimated 70% of the country's population in 1985 was younger than 24 (Central Statistical Office, 1985). Most young people in Belize have been exposed to a decade or more of American television. Their exposure occurred during government efforts to build a grassroots sense of national identity and pride in "being Belizean." The larger, more immediate, and perhaps more vivid world opened up by television may interfere with the process of identification with their own nation.

A strong sense of national identity has been a foundation of powerful states throughout history. As the historian Will Durant (1944) explained in his study of the lengthy lifespan of the Roman Republic (508-49 B.C.): "Perhaps it endured because of . . . the proud patriotism formed in the home, the school, the temple, the army, the Assembly, and the Senate. Devotion to the state marked the zenith of the Republic . . . " (p. 35).

Of course, the Romans of the Republic had no television to interfere with their devotion to the state. In more modern times, those who hope to shape or change conceptions of national identity also hope to control all the elements of how national identity is portrayed, including media

portrayals of national life. Egypt's Minister of Education reports that Islamic fundamentalists are trying to promote a pan-Islamic identity by barring students from singing the Egyptian national anthem and preventing them from saluting the Egyptian flag. According to the minister, Dr. Hussein Kamel Baha Al-Din, the fundamentalists disapprove of drama, media, the theater and the arts. "There was to be no [Egyptian] national identity--only an Islamic one," the minister said of the continuing fundamentalist pressure on national traditions in the 1990s (Weaver, 1995, p. 64).

The same type of concerns about media impacts on national identity have been heard for many years in Belize. Influential Belizeans have said that television is a powerful source of foreign influence with a possibly negative impact on Belizean life. In the 1980s, Said Musa, the Belizean minister of Education, Sports and Culture, worried about the influence of U.S. television as he addressed a UNESCO conference:

> Today we experience the phenomenon of having direct U.S. satellite TV broadcasts in our homes 24 hours a day. This explosion of television and its cultural implications is thrusting upon Belizeans an awareness of the opportunities presented while at the same time challenging us with an urgent responsibility to ensure the integrity of our culture. (Bolland, 1986, p. 63)

Musa's statement indicates a belief in television's power to portray opportunities not available to many Belizean viewers. Foreign television pictures of the world beyond Belize often show the attractive opportunities the

minister worried about in the 1980s as a threat to Belizean national culture. The object of this research was to collect information from Belizean young people about their media exposure, media preferences for information, and media dependencies in an effort to assess the impact of their media use on feelings of national identity.

Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study was to develop a better understanding of the relationship between media--foreign media in particular--and national identity among young people in a developing country. It was necessary to always keep in mind that local and national media also play a role in socialization and that the measurable personal influences of all mass media may be weak and subject to varying interpretations depending on the variables measured (Potter, 1994). Despite these challenges, research on mass media and national identity relationships in a developing country offers a productive examination of communication theories such as media imperialism in former colonial countries (e.g., Schiller, 1989).

If nothing else, global television may teach young people a visual language every viewer must learn to gain meaning from television (Altheide & Snow, 1979). How much audiences learn from foreign television and how foreign messages influence individual viewers are questions many leaders in developing nations would like to have answered.

For instance, the great populations of China, India, and Bangladesh are seeing increasing amounts of foreign television content in the 1990s, especially from the United States (Auletta, 1993; Foote, 1993).

One anthropologist who has studied Central America for more than 20 years believes television has made the world outside Belize accessible in a way that Belize Radio and the nation's weekly newspapers have not. According to his research, satellite television created a sense of real time participation in many events beyond the borders of Belize and a sense of citizenship in what may be called the "global television world."

The growing popularity of foreign television has some Belizeans claiming that "our national identity is disappearing" (Wilk, 1989, p. 10). According to this view of media use, Belizeans enjoy only the option of turning their televisions on or off; all other media choices already are media-supplied. This conclusion by some Belizeans seems difficult to support in a country where local radio is extremely popular and newspaper sales are high in relation to most developed countries. For example, one survey found that 96% of young people reported that Belize radio stations were their favorite radio sources (Elliott, 1992).

The true impact of foreign television in Belize is unknown. Media research in Belize has ignored the issue of television's interaction with national identity creation and

maintenance. Studies of Belizean public opinion about television have not included national identity as a key dependent variable although a few studies measured constructs such as desire to buy foreign products or to emigrate to the United States (Oliveira, 1986; Roser, Snyder, & Chaffee, 1986).

The time spent with television may create a more attractive picture of the rest of the world and a less attractive picture of Belize and its culture. On the other hand, television may give young people in Belize a view of a much more dangerous and frightening world when compared with the relatively peaceful life they share in Belize. Still another possibility is that young Belizeans may use television to build an even stronger sense of national identity by sharing and discussing information they have seen on television and comparing it with their own experiences. Without empirical evidence, assuming that television is a positive or negative force in national identity is only speculation.

To examine these issues, the key variables measured in this study are (1) the amounts of individual exposure to and dependency on newspaper, magazine, radio, television, and interpersonal sources of information both from within Belize and from outside the country, and (2) the strength of a sense of national identity, the criterion variable for this study. Measuring exposure and dependency patterns for both

Belize and foreign media creates an opportunity to compare the media relationships of young people who are locally oriented versus those who may see themselves as globally oriented.

Summary

Foreign television, especially the U.S. programs that are pervasive in Belize, may weaken the national identity of young Belizeans by offering a rosy portrayal of life elsewhere. On *The Cosby Show*, for example, a middle-class black family enjoys a very comfortable and materialistic life that some Belizean young people may believe is the prevailing standard in the United States. On the other hand, television may portray a more dangerous and frightening world outside Belize that strengthens young people's positive feelings about their country.

Negative information about the United States may arrive in the form of either television news or entertainment programs. As an example, the very popular and highly rated television series *Roots* portrayed the struggle of a black family enslaved by whites, emphasizing the historic conflict between black and white people in the American South. U.S. movies such as *In the Heat of the Night* also focus on racial conflicts between white and black Americans. Even the daily news broadcasts to Belize of the O.J. Simpson trial emphasized present day U.S. racial conflicts.

American television entertainment programs present both a positive and negative picture of ethnic conflict rather than the cooperative ethnic policy stressed by the Belizean national government and written into the constitution of Belize. U.S. television news broadcasts also present a variety of pictures of economic and educational opportunities in the United States. Which picture of life outside Belize are Belizean young people most likely to accept and how do information sources, both interpersonal and mass media sources, correlate with feelings of national or "global" identity?

In this research, very positive feelings of national identity are expected to reflect greater commonality with Belize than with other countries. Stronger feelings of "being Belizean" are expected from those who rely heavily on Belize radio and newspapers for information than from those who are heavily television reliant. It is important to remember that foreign television programs do not operate in a vacuum in Belize. Other media and interpersonal sources of information also play key roles in shaping national identity.

Viewers in the northern part of the country can receive television programs from Mexico, while some viewers in southern Belize can receive programs from Guatemala and Honduras. Young people also read U.S. newspapers and magazines and publications from neighboring Central American

countries. They also communicate with relatives and friends in these countries, including the United States.

This research will measure the media exposure, media uses, media dependencies, and feelings of national identity among young people in Belize. The survey respondents have spent their lives watching mostly U.S. television, while growing up in the new nation of Belize, listening to Belize radio, and reading newspapers from Belize. The object of this research is to compare the associations between both foreign and national media and feelings of national identity.

CHAPTER 2
BELIZE MEDIA

An outline of the media climate in Belize at the time of this research provides a basis for understanding the hypothesized relationships between media and national identity that will be proposed later. Predictor, or independent, variables in this research include individual exposure to and dependency on newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and interpersonal sources of information from within and outside of Belize. The criterion variable of national identity is defined and discussed thoroughly in the review of literature that follows this chapter.

This section is not intended as a complete history of the media in Belize, but as a guide to the regulatory climate and media mix leading up to 1995. Belizean media did not arrive overnight, so some discussion of the development of newspapers, magazines, radio, and television is necessary to give context to this research. An examination of events leading up to the Belize Broadcasting and Television Act of 1983 seems particularly important in understanding how U.S. television programs quickly dominated Belize broadcasting.

Even the casual observer of broadcast regulation can appreciate how the writing of a regulatory framework for television two years after the arrival of foreign programs exemplifies government reaction rather than carefully planned action. The rapid spread of television around the country before regulations could be written demonstrates how developing countries can be overwhelmed by what has been called a "global American electronic invasion" (Schiller, 1970, p. 79).

The Influence of National Independence

The Belizean government's slow reaction to the sudden appearance of television can be explained in part by the near simultaneous arrival of independence and foreign programming. The new government had to deal with a wide range of important issues; broadcast regulation was not in the forefront of the national consciousness when independence came in 1981. Government inaction in regulating television service appeared to give a silent blessing to private entrepreneurs who continued to buy equipment and expand cable services in the early 1980s (Brogdon, 1986). By the time the Belizean government got involved in broadcast regulation aimed at television, the idea of a government-operated television service along the lines of Radio Belize had all but ceased to exist.

Understanding the Belize media climate in 1995 also requires an appreciation of the popularity and pervasiveness

of radio, especially government-operated Radio Belize and Friends FM. Radio Belize became a national institution in a country with no national newspaper, no daily newspapers, and a poor network of roads that made internal travel difficult. Radio was an obvious and inexpensive solution to many mass communication problems. In the 29 years between its beginnings and the arrival of national independence, Radio Belize provided emergency information for people in remote areas, announced deaths and personal messages across the country, and provided news, music, and entertainment in English, Spanish, Creole, and Mayan dialects. By the early 1970s, the number of radios in Belize was greater than the number of households and radio was a very popular national voice (Setzekorn, 1981).

Finally, the rapid arrival of satellite television from the United States, combined with the unchecked expansion of local cable systems in an unregulated market, added a very popular and exotically foreign flavor to the media mix in Belize. The modern forces of technology and private enterprise moved into a country with a culture steeped in tradition and top-down colonial rule. The arrival of American satellite television in a nation with poor infrastructure, many isolated villages, and a largely colonial culture brought along the clash of modern and traditional values commonly observed in developing countries around the world.

In a nation where neither radio nor newspapers used any of the world's major newswire services, television threw open a sharply visual window to major world events. The young people of Belize began to share the same television programs and visual culture as their contemporaries in the United States. Evidence of a change in taste toward American popular culture is found among Belizean high school students in 1995 who enjoy Chicago Bulls games on cable television and ask American visitors about the progress of the O.J. Simpson trial.

Press Theory and Belize

Press theories commonly include perspectives on how national media reflect the social and political systems in place within the country under study (Altschull, 1984; Lowenstein & Merrill, 1990; Picard, 1983; Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956; Sussman, 1983). One of the earliest media theory systems classified media as either authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, or Soviet Communist (Siebert et al., 1956). Belize fits within the libertarian tradition of private ownership of a press with its rights guaranteed by law. The same statement could have been made at the time of Belizean independence.

Oliveira (1990) said the climate of laissez-faire relations between government and the press in Belize suggests a combination of the libertarian and social responsibility models described by Seibert et al. (1956),

but he concluded that the libertarian model best fits the media in Belize. Long before independence in 1981, Belize followed a democratic, constitutional path, with the introduction of universal adult suffrage in 1954 and a ministerial system in 1960 (Fernandez, 1989). The country formally adopted an internal self-government constitution in 1964, followed by independence 17 years later.

Belize in 1995 was a constitutional monarchy, with the British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, serving as head of state. The queen is represented by a governor-general who appoints a prime minister from within the House of Representatives. The governor-general appoints the prime minister on the basis of that person's ability to command a majority of the members of the House, but in practice the prime minister is the leader of the majority party.

With a government consisting of a popularly elected House of Representatives and a relatively balanced two-party system, Belize represents stable democratic traditions in an area where democracies have a somewhat checkered history. Central America reflects a tradition of coups, military leadership, and great disparities between rich and poor, but Belize presents a picture of stability (Fernandez, 1989). The constitutional guarantees of free expression, assembly, and association in Belize are among the criteria used to assess the strength of democracy in Latin American countries (Johnson & Kelly, 1986). Belize measures up very well as a

democratic country according to these criteria, which also include the relative freedom of Belizean mass media.

The press in Belize has a history of partisanship, but it is free to criticize the government. Publishers seem to enjoy excoriating government figures, even at the risk of appearing biased to their readers (Harmon, 1988). Radio has been dominated by the government-operated Broadcasting Corporation of Belize, but a few privately owned stations began to appear in the 1990s. Television began as a freewheeling entrepreneurial activity operating with few government restrictions and ineffective enforcement of existing rules (Weaver, 1993). On the whole, very few restrictions on media ownership exist, and media in Belize function within the libertarian press tradition.

The Media Climate in Belize

In 1995, Belize offered a media-rich environment to a highly literate audience. National literacy was estimated at 93% (World Almanac, 1995) and most Belizeans enjoyed easy access to television, radio, newspapers, and a few Belizean magazines. In a developing country with a relatively low annual per capita gross domestic product of $1,635 (U.S.), the average Belizean was not wealthy when compared with the typical citizen in neighboring Mexico, where economic conditions were somewhat better ($3,600 annual GDP). However, the typical Belizean could take pride in being slightly better off than a citizen living across the western

border in Guatemala ($1,300 annual GDP), or a few miles to the south in nearby Honduras ($1,090 annual GDP).

Despite this apparent poverty and a weak national economy, Belize had at least 18 television and cable services by the late 1980s, an average of one television station for every 9,000 viewers, and one of the highest rates of VCR ownership in the Western Hemisphere (Lent, 1990, 1991). In 1990, the nation's 209,000 citizens owned an estimated 109,000 radios and 31,000 televisions, about one television for every seven Belizeans (Europa World Year Book, 1994). In 1994, Belize had nearly 21,000 telephones, an average of one telephone for every 10 people, an INTELSAT satellite earth station capable of receiving messages from around the world, a shortwave station, six AM radio stations, five FM stations, and a Voice of America relay station broadcasting in both Spanish and English (CIA World Factbook, 1994; Europa World Year Book, 1994).

No daily newspapers were published in Belize in 1995, but citizens had access to several privately owned weeklies. The weekly papers usually lined up either for or against one of Belize's political parties. Magazines were less plentiful than newspapers. Magazines about Belize typically were published either by the government or by private interests in the United States. Some American magazines such as *Time* and *Cosmopolitan* could be found, but only after some searching. Newsstands in Belize were rare; the weekly

papers were distributed by street vendors or sold over the counter in stores that stocked only one or two stacks of papers.

Newspapers

Modern day media development in Belize began with the foundation of the weekly newspaper *Belize Billboard* in 1947 by George Price, who later became the nation's first Prime Minister. Price used the newspaper as a platform to attack colonial policies, promote his General Workers Union (GWU) and assist in his political campaigns; he was first elected to the Belize City Council in 1947 (Bolland, 1986). The *Belize Billboard* began a tradition of extremely aggressive partisan newspapers that continues in the newspapers published today. The *Belize Billboard* became a daily in 1950 and an outspoken voice for the People's United Party (PUP), emphasizing pro-American, pro-free enterprise, and strongly anti-colonial policies (Oliveira, 1990).

The *Belize Billboard* ceased its association with the PUP in 1956 and served as a critic of PUP policies until it stopped publishing in 1973. The People's United Party soon established a successor to the *Belize Billboard*, called *The Belize Times*, in 1959. During the 1980s, the number of weekly newspapers fluctuated between five and seven at any given time, but these papers covered events from sharply differing political viewpoints, serving mainly as political organs (Barry, 1989). The *Reporter* claimed to be

independent, but generally supported positions of the PUP's main opposition, the United Democratic Party (UDP) while *Amandala* served as the voice of the Black Power Movement in Belize (Oliveira, 1990).

Each paper has a history of holding to a strongly political viewpoint, engaging in shrill name calling and personal attacks. As an example, the British governor ordered the arrest of the editors of *The Sentinel* in 1978 after the paper named him "asshole of the month" (Lent, 1989, p. 16). The seemingly unrestrained political rhetoric has resulted in low press credibility among readers (Harmon, 1988).

By the 1980s, one public opinion survey of media use and trust found newspapers were the least trusted communication medium in Belize. Only 6% of respondents said they trusted newspapers most, as compared with 25% who said they trusted radio most and 54% who said they trusted television most. Belize newspapers were named the least trusted medium by 71% of respondents, as compared with 8% for radio, 6% for magazines, and 5% for television (Harmon, 1988).

Despite their partisan stance, the newspapers of Belize appear to serve as a force for building national identity because they follow politics very closely and maintain a consistent editorial stance, in much the same manner as early newspapers during the American colonial period.

Because newspapers follow a party viewpoint with a partisan voice, they function as checks on the party in power. Readers jarred by the sharply political and often nakedly subjective news angles found on front pages of Belizean newspapers may compare them with colonial American newspapers like Sam Adams' *Independent Advertiser*, which regularly attacked the ruling British colonial government in the mid-1700s as a "prerogative party" with an "itch for riding the Beasts of the People" (Unger, 1992, p. 108).

The lead sentence of a 1995 front page story in *The Belize Times* gives the flavor of the modern-day Belizean press. As the voice of the PUP, *The Belize Times* misses few opportunities to criticize the ruling United Democratic Party of Prime Minister Manuel Esquivel. Under the headline, "Speaker assaults Ms Ali," the lead sentence read: "The Speaker of the House of Representatives, BQ Pitts, who was attorney for one of the accused drug dealers in the biggest cocaine haul in Belize, on Friday, January 13, physically assaulted and abused BELIZE TIMES photographer Marion Ali" ("Speaker assaults," 1995).

The "black power" newspaper *Amandala* also gave similar front-page coverage to the House Speaker's alleged attack on the photographer, calling it "an embarrassing, ugly incident" ("Black Friday reshuffle," 1995). In contrast, the pro-UDP newspaper *The People's Pulse* used its front page to cover a restructuring of Prime Minister Esquivel's

cabinet and the opening of the 1995 Supreme Court session. No mention of the alleged photographer assault appeared in *The People's Pulse*, which bills itself as "the heartbeat of Belize."

Belizeans who want a break from the heavily political content of their weekly papers can buy the international edition of *The Miami Herald*, flown in each morning from Florida. The *Herald's* international edition is available in Belize City and in many resort areas only hours after it is printed in Miami. Despite its same-day publication schedule, the newspaper is not available throughout the country. Citizens in far western Belize might go for months at a time without seeing a foreign newspaper.

The content of Belizean and foreign newspapers is very different. While most Belize newspapers covered political wrangling over their House Speaker's actions in mid-January, 1995, the *Herald* headlined rising interest rates in the U.S., an earthquake in Japan, and the O.J. Simpson trial, complete with a front page picture of Simpson and one of his jury consultants. The *Herald* used wire service reports from many other countries, while the typical Belize newspaper's coverage of international events was very limited.

Belizean weekly papers published in 1995 included *Amandala*, *The Belize Times*, *The People's Pulse*, *Reporter*, *The Alliance*, and the government's press offering, *Government Gazette*. News in all the papers published in

Belize carried a local slant. Historically, Belize papers have not used stories from the international newswires because of the cost of the service (Oliveira, 1990). International news coverage rarely appears, although some stories are reprinted from *The Miami Herald's* international edition or occasionally from other large U.S. papers such as *The New York Times*.

Magazines

While Americans may choose from dozens of magazine titles found in almost any convenience market or bookstore, the situation is far different in Belize. Locally produced general circulation news and feature magazines simply do not exist in Belize. Government publications such as *Belize Today* are read mostly by other journalists as a source of statistical data for news reports (Oliveira, 1990). A survey of media use by Harmon (1988) found that Belizeans got most of their news from television (48%) and radio (34%); only 2% reported getting most of their news from magazines.

Magazines published in Belize provide a negligible portion in the nation's popular media mix. The Belize Information Service prints *Belize Today*, a monthly government publication mailed free of charge to a large number of journalists and other interested subscribers. *Belize Review* ($4.50 BZ), a privately owned slick-cover monthly, leans heavily toward environmental features,

billing itself as dedicated to "environmental education, conservation and ecotourism." The magazine, published in Belize City, appears to target an international audience, with maps of tourist destinations and articles on parks, wildlife, and biological diversity.

The monthly *Belize Currents* ($3.95 BZ) publishes not in Belize, but in Memphis, Tennessee. Its content focuses on government information and features about business, trade, and commerce in Belize, hardly topics of popular interest to a general audience. The quarterly *Belize Magazine* ($4.95 BZ) publiahes from Nashville, Tennessee, with editorial officea in Pensacola, Florida. Both *Belize Currents* and *Belize Magazine* feature lavish, full-color photo layouts promoting diving, hiking, and ecotourism. Both are filled with advertisements for resorts, banks, lodges, and travel companies.

The lack of general-interest Belizean magazines, combined with a partisan press low in objectivity, appears to discourage many citizens from reading Belize newspapers and periodicals. In two separate surveys during a two-year period, Harmon (1988) found that 27% and 35% of respondents in Belize said they had read no newspapers or magazines during the preceding week, an indication of low interest in locally produced print media. Young people appeared to follow the national trend of low interest in most newspapera and magazines. Elliott (1992) found that only half of high

school age respondents reported reading a newspaper during the past week. Only 16% said they read a newspaper from another country during a typical week.

Newspaper circulation rates historically hovered between 3,500 and 5,000 (Lent, 1989; Oliveira, 1990), but by 1995, the circulation of *Amandala* had grown to 8,500 (Willings Press Guide, 1994). Most papers do not report their circulation figures, but *Amandala's* 8,500 copies in a nation of just over 200,000 people is remarkable. The largest U.S. newspapers publish about 2 million copies daily; an American circulation similar to that of *Amandala* would require a press run of about 11 million copies. With one of the highest literacy rates in the Third World, the Belizean print media command public attention, but from a very discriminating audience. Some followed the print media very closely, carefully scrutinizing stories by topic; some ignored newspapers and magazines altogether.

Radio

For most of its history, government-operated Radio Belize enjoyed a virtual monopoly on broadcasting inside the country. Belizeans could pick up some AM signals and shortwave broadcasts from outside their borders, but within Belize, no other choices existed. The national radio service began in 1952 as British Honduras Broadcasting, using a British financial grant, equipment, and personnel (Lent, 1989). During the 1960s, the station switched to a

semi-commercial operational structure supervised by the Broadcasting Corporation of Belize (BCB) and airing paid advertising. During the 1970s Radio Belize continued to function as an AM-only service, on the air from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., playing music that ranged from classic American popular songs to reggae selections.

At the time of national independence, Radio Belize broadcast from 5 a.m. until 12 p.m., mostly in English and Spanish, offering a diversity of programs that gave a multicultural flavor to its schedule (Oliveira, 1990). Radio announcers often showed off a fluency in English, Spanish and Creole, mixing Mexican music with U.S. hits and a variety of song styles from the West Indies. Radio Belize in 1995 moved seamlessly from English to Spanish to Creole, from music to talk shows, from rap to religion, including weather, obituaries, and local announcements in a potpourri of styles. The station has maintained a strong emphasis on grassroots programming that includes agricultural information, local news, and public affairs.

For financial reasons, Radio Belize never has subscribed to outside newswire services, which are considered too costly. The station has depended on the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Voice of America for its news and actualities about international events. This agreement allows the BCB to air rewritten reports from the BBC and the VOA under a mutual use agreement (Oliveira,

1990; Patrick Jones, personal communication, June 26, 1995). The lack of ties to international wire services creates an emphasis on local and national radio news. At Radio Belize, station personnel produce a number of nationally oriented programs such as *A Current Affair* that include a mix of music, information about government, and advice on styles and fashions. The radio "voice" of Belize also carries a distinctly local tone in its newscasts.

Radio service expanded at the time of independence and the introduction of foreign television, adding FM broadcasting to the existing AM service and delivering stereo FM in some areas (Lent, 1989). The old Radio Belize split into "Friends FM" and "Radio One" on the AM band. After independence, the programming seemed to fit more than ever in the mold that American broadcasting consultants often call "news you can use." Correspondents in each of the country's six districts contributed agricultural news, personal messages, and general interest news, from changes in bus schedules to soccer matches, political gatherings, and dances (Oliveira, 1990).

After satellite-based television began to expand, the radio service responded by placing an even stronger emphasis on local content. Lent (1991) reported that Radio One, the government's AM radio service, reacted to foreign television by making 75% of all shows local and by programming 60% Caribbean and Central American music. Radio One also

carried programs for a variety of cultural and ethnic groups. By the late 1980s, Radio One included programs like *The Ketchi Show*, *Mopan Maya Show*, and *The Garifuna Show* in its weekly schedule (Belize Radio One Programme Supplement, 1988). The Ketchi, Mopan, and Garifuna are among the many indigenous groups in Belize.

The Bahai Viewpoint, *What's New at the Zoo*, *The Top Ten in Spanish*, *Al Habla con la Gente del Campo*, *Death Announcements*, *Showers of Blessings*, and *Reggae Uprising* illustrate the variety of radio programming available. Most of the programs on the two government-operated radio stations in the 1990s continued to emphasize music, but many of the popular songs from the United States were replaced by a more indigenous sound, including reggae and rap music in both Spanish and English. Many of the records played on the AM station in 1995, which had changed its name once again from Radio One back to Radio Belize, were simply cover versions of American songs done by Caribbean and Central American singers. Despite the lack of originality in the music, the American accents on the records were replaced by Central American and Caribbean accents for a more "local" sound.

The emphasis on locally originated radio in the 1990s included a lengthy BCB series of live broadcasts from around Belize to spotlight local culture. The series, called *Village Life*, included broadcasts originating from points as

distant as the village of Big Falls in southern Belize and tiny Progresso in northern Belize. The live broadcasts focused on people, culture, traditions and customs in the villages of Belize (P. E. Jones, personal communication, January 18, 1995). The *Village Life* programs, which have been popular in the past, based their appeal on the same kind of traditions and folklore of Belize that may be disappearing in the age of global communication.

Competition from commercial stations in the 1990s has added to the pressure on Radio Belize and Friends FM to deliver a popular product. The monopoly position of the government-owned radio services is gone (Table 1). A list of radio broadcasters obtained from the Belize Broadcasting Authority included several privately owned stations that now compete for audiences with the Broadcasting Corporation of Belize.

The number of radio stations in Belize fluctuates as private owners get into the broadcasting business and sometimes leave quickly. One television station manager said all Belizean broadcasters face a struggle for limited advertising dollars; Belize has few businesses that can afford broadcast advertising (Marie Hoare, telephone interview, June 10, 1994). The privately owned radio stations face an uphill battle to change the habits of Belizeans who grew up listening to Radio Belize.

Table 1. Belize Radio Stations--1995.

Name	Location	Assignment
Radio Belize (AM)	Belize City	830 khz
Radio Belize (AM)	Punta Gorda	910 khz
Friends FM	Belize City	88.9 Mhz
Estereo Amor (FM)	Belize City	97.9 Mhz
FM 2000	Belize City	90.5 Mhz
Love FM	Orange Walk	107.1 Mhz
My Refuge (FM)	Belmopan	93.7 Mhz
Radio KREM (FM)	Belize City	96.5 Mhz
South 103.3 (FM)	Punta Gorda	103.3 Mhz

(Sources: Belize Broadcasting Authority, Belize City; Belize Public Information Office, Belmopan)

A 1991 BCB survey of listenera in Belize City and outlying areas indicated that two-thirds of the respondents preferred Friends FM over other stations and 92% were satisfied with the music variety provided by Radio Belize and Friends FM. In addition, 70% of those polled said they were satisfied with local news provided by BCB (Broadcasting Corporation of Belize Survey, 1991). While a BCB survey reporting satisfaction with BCB news and programming may be somewhat suspect, radio is extremely popular in Belize, and the BCB stations have a long history of popularity with local audiences. In 1995, Radio Belize and Friends FM continued to dominate radio broadcasting in Belize.

Television

At the time of its independence in 1981, Belize reluctantly nurtured an infant television industry based on pirated American programs. The first seeds of television development were planted in 1978, when an American named Robert Landis began selling videocassette recorders to a few Belizeans and mailing them a selection of tapes from Miami. American expatriate Emory King launched the next step toward broadcast television in Belize by buying an earth station, taping U.S. television programs, and renting out the tapes to VCR owners (Lent, 1989). King applied to the government of Belize for permission to telecast his programs, but was turned down.

Television broadcasting began in 1981, when American expatriate Arthur Hoare built the second earth station in Belize and rebroadcast U.S. programs without the license mandated by the Belize Telecommunication Authority Ordinance of 1972. Hoare also built a 110-foot tower and began broadcasting to two dozen families who had paid $4,000 BZ ($2,000 U.S.) for a lifetime of television (Brogdon, 1986). Hoare's success in defying the law requiring a license to broadcast is credited to the bureaucratic inefficiency caused by the pressures of dealing with independence, Hoare's potentially important friends in government, uncertainty about whether the laws of Belize actually applied to the receptions of broadcast satellite

transmissions, and government apathy toward a situation that involved only a few wealthy families (Lent, 1989).

When a clever Belize City television technician figured out how to tune in Hoare's over-the-air signals without paying for them, the Pandora's box of television in Belize was opened, never to be closed. Soon, Belize City television owners were paying a bargain fee to have their televisions adjusted to pick up Hoare's signal, and the rapid spread of television began (Oliveira, 1990). Once it became affordable to have a television set up to receive the broadcast signals going out over Belize City, more Belizeans saw a practical reason to invest in televisions.

The Belizean government, dominated at the time by the People's United Party (PUP), had promised in a 1979 manifesto to deliver television before the next national election, set for 1984 (Brogdon, 1986). Because national independence was a top priority, nothing had been done to provide television when receiving antennas began popping up around Belize City in 1982. The government had no legislation to regulate the importation of satellite television, but considered the importation and sale of satellite signals illegal. To fill the legal gap, the PUP Cabinet drafted the Broadcasting and Television Act of 1983, creating a seven-member Belize Broadcasting Authority (BBA), composed of industry representatives, journalists, and citizens.

The legislation required both radio and television stations to apply to the BBA for a license. The BBA would pass license applications on to a minister of communications. Failure to comply with broadcast regulations could bring a fine of $5,000 and up to 12 months in prison (Broadcasting and Television Act, 1983).

When the Broadcasting and Television Act was passed, many Belizeans seemed to believe that they might soon have a national television industry that would compete with imported television from the United States.

"We just don't have funds for local television," the Attorney General of Belize said in 1984. "That does not mean that we will just let the satellite services take our place" (Brogdon, 1986, p. 119). While private satellite television services continued to grow, the government television presence failed to materialize, even when the strongly pro-television United Democratic Party (UDP) won the 1984 elections and took over from the PUP. Many UDP members felt that the PUP had dominated broadcasting through control of Radio Belize and feared government control of a television station, which might cost $1 million to launch.

"The best they can do is try to intersperse local programs with the satellite programs," representative Philip Goldson said in 1984 (Brogdon, 1986, p. 122). Goldson turned out to be a prophet. Belize television in 1995 followed the pattern Goldson predicted, with local

programming slipped in between long intervals of foreign content. No national television presence in the mold of Radio Belize seems likely to appear.

The government's lack of planning and enthusiasm for television, the stresses of independence, a lack of public funds, and a non-existent regulatory framework for satellite signals allowed a privately owned system of television broadcasting in Belize. Some stations had been operating for several years by the time they were licensed in 1986. By 1987, at least 12 Belizean earth stations pirated United States television for transmission around the country and television continued to grow in popularity among the population (Lent, 1989).

As to the legality of pirating U.S. television programs, the Belizeans who imported American satellite television in Belize had reasons to believe they were doing nothing wrong. One of the pioneers of satellite television in Belize wrote to a number of U.S. broadcasters to explain that he was recording their programs on videocassettes and renting them out. He was told that under the terms of the INTELSAT treaty, of which the U.S. was a signatory, member countries could not sell their programming outside national borders (Weaver, 1993). Another television pioneer said the Belizean government knew he was importing a television broadcasting tower and other equipment. By allowing him to accept the import duties on the equipment that would be used

to bring foreign programming into Belize, a tacit government approval of his operation appeared to be given (Brogdon, 1986).

In 1986, the Belize Broadcasting Authority called for licensed television stations to air at least 1% locally produced programming, but the requirement was not enforced because stations claimed the programming was not available (Lent, 1989). Since that time, local production and audience access to local programming have improved. Several private channels were on the air by the early 1990s, including Channel 7 (Tropical Vision), Channel 9 (CTV), Channel 13 (religious), Channel 5 (Great Belize Television), and Channel 3, a short-lived government television operation (Weaver, 1993).

In 1995, some Belizeans could choose from two competing evening newscasts on Channel 5 and Channel 7. A handful of locally produced talk shows such as *Lauren Da Nite*, which spotlighted Belizean culture, and *One On One With Dickie Bradley* also aired regularly. News operations at the government's television effort, BCB-operated Channel 3, had been suspended in 1994, a casualty of faulty equipment and high costs (Trevor Jeffries, telephone interview, June 10, 1994). Some cable outlets carried programming produced in Belize City, or even short programs produced and edited for cable use only. The Belize Broadcasting Authority listed 12

television stations authorized to operate as of January, 1995 (Table 2).

Television in Belize continued to present an overwhelmingly American influence in 1995, but local production had made great strides since the arrival of U.S. programs in an unregulated atmosphere 14 years earlier. The availability of competing local newscasts in the nation's capital, the beginnings of locally produced programming, and the growth of cable outlets to carry the programming hint at

Table 2. Belize Television Stations--1995.

Name	Location	Assignment
Baymen Broadcasting Network	Belize City	Ch. 9 & 13
Tropical Vision Ltd.	Belize City	Ch. 7
Good News Covenant	Belize City	Ch. 11
Great Belize Television	Belize City	Ch. 5
Broadcasting Corp. of Belize	Belize City	Ch. 3
Centaur Communications Corp.	Orange Walk	Ch. 3
Northern Broadcasting System	Orange Walk	Ch. 8 & 10
Tropical Vision Ltd.	Belmopan	Ch. 12
SEN	San Ignacio	Ch. 8
San Pedro Television Ltd.	Ambergris Caye	Ch. 2 & 4
Valley Vision TV Ltd.	Stann Creek	Ch. 12
SBS Television	Corozal	Ch. 2 & 13

(Source: Belize Broadcasting Authority, Belize City)

an increased local television presence in years to come. Despite the challenges of competing against the slick production and special effects, professional actors, and the much larger budgets characteristic of both U.S. and Mexican television, programming in Belize was making progress in the 1990s.

Like station managers everywhere, those in Belize must balance the income they can count on against the costs of providing more attractions. In Belize, this situation is exacerbated by a very limited advertiser base and extremely strong competition. Despite the financial pinch, Channel 5's management planned to expand the reach of the station's signal from the area around Belize City to most parts of the country through a system of towers and cable system access:

> We keep in pretty close touch with the community. People watch our programming. We try to get more and better local shows without stretching our resources, and technically it will take less than a year to reach a nationwide audience. (Stewart Krohn, Channel 5 managing director, personal communication, January 18, 1995)

Channel 7, the closest competitor to Channel 5, also produces some local programs. The station's office manager said her staff had produced several local programs in the past year, including a show videotaped in a prison. She said local material can compete successfully with television from the United States because it provides content that is of local interest and unavailable elsewhere (Hazel Vasquez, personal communication, January 18, 1995).

Summary

The libertarian press model at work in Belize began with a press centered on political movements and partisan commentary, much like the colonial American press of the 1700s before U.S. independence. Just like the American press, the Belizean press took root in a colonial society ruled by the British Empire. Newspapers in Belize have developed a different interpretation of journalistic objectivity than that found in the United States, but they also have a goal of serving as a watchdog over government. Belize newspapers continue to be very partisan and privately owned. The very few magazines published in Belize have limited circulation. One is published by the government.

Radio in Belize followed a social responsibility model, set up under British rule with government sponsorship and operated under government supervision. The tradition of government help and sponsorship continued after independence, although radio did accept advertising and operate in a semi-commercial manner. Radio Belize combined a development journalism model with the strong popular appeal of programs targeted to the many ethnic and language groups in the country. The government also allowed competition, even though it might have succeeded in barring private ownership of radio or making such ownership financially unsuccessful.

The libertarian tradition appears most strongly in the development of television in Belize. Although the government had plans to develop its own television service, it never acted to halt private television broadcasting, even when many Cabinet ministers felt that satellite television without licensing was illegal. The laissez-faire attitude toward the press in Belize allowed private television ownership to make public television financially untenable and politically unpopular.

Today, television in Belize is changing very slowly from its almost totally foreign content to more locally produced material, but the change has more to do with market forces than government regulation. Government has taken no responsibility for helping Belize television operators succeed against foreign competitors. When the government's own television operation could not succeed, it simply closed down, perhaps a classic case of how a libertarian press may function in a developing country.

In summary, Belize newspapers and magazines carry almost exclusively local content. Radio in Belize maintains a tradition of exhaustive coverage of local and national affairs, with little news of international events. Television, by contrast, presents a powerful emphasis on international news through channels such as CNN and other U.S. networks, and practically non-existent coverage of Belizean affairs. Some local television content has

appeared, and that content appears to be growing, but it is still a weak national voice.

For these reasons, Belizeans who spend a lot of time with satellite-imported television at the expense of other national media such as radio and magazines may have a different world view than those who spend most of their time with Belize media. The imported television view is expected to be generally "global" in nature. The Belize media view is expected to lean toward the local. The relationship of these media trends to feelings of national identity forms the basis for this research study.

CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

A focus on associations between national identity and media exposure and dependency requires conceptualizations of how national identity is formed, how it is defined, and how media dependency theory has been operationalized. Previous studies of the effects of media use and dependency in cultures around the world also are relevant to the questions addressed here. The literature reviewed in this chapter covers (1) national identity formation and maintenance, (2) individual media system dependency theory, and (3) previous studies of media influence and effects.

The working assumption of this literature review is that television's role in national identity formation and maintenance in Belize has not been covered in previous research. For this reason, the literature review is accompanied by explanations of how the materials covered apply to specific situations within Belize. A second assumption is that the research results might be generalizable to other countries dealing with the influences of global mass media, especially television. A third assumption is that the arrival of foreign television and national independence in Belize at virtually the same time

created a model situation in which to study national development and media development simultaneously.

The first conceptual approach examines some of the ways national identity is communicated within a country. Conceptualizing national identity formation as a communications process follows the reasoning that people in a new nation must *learn* in some way "who we are now." Answers to citizen questions about who they really are and how they may be expected to behave must be communicated. A sense of national identity develops from that dialogue.

National Identity as Communications Strategy

A conceptual approach to national identity formation developed by Atal (1985) emphasizes the role of all communication from within and from outside national borders. This approach views the basic issue facing nations emerging from the colonial era as a communication problem. For example, a new nation like Belize builds a stronger sense of nationalism through a communications system of *"apertures"* and *"insulators,"* which allows both inflows and outflows through a political system that functions as a membrane (Atal, 1985, p. 6).

Insulators block out messages, ideas, and people. Apertures control and regulate the inward flow of outside influences. Tightening or restricting communications apertures theoretically increases the interaction of individuals and groups inside the political system by

reducing communication from outside the system. National governments strive to find the proper balance of communication within the country and from outside its borders. Communication may be thought of as any interchange of people, products, or ideas.

Atal classified language and ethnicity as effective insulators within a political system. Language and ethnicity can divide and insulate groups within a nation. In a new nation, language and ethnicity differences may follow a pattern of insularity encouraged by past colonial governments to keep feelings of unity low. New nations must use communications to break down patterns of insularity within the country.

Atal (1985) coined the term "sandwich cultures" (p. 9) to describe problems in nation building caused by groups that may have migrated into an area, or who have carefully maintained their culture, language, and ethos. India, for example, is a culture of many sects and groups characterized by low interaction. People from one caste may be forbidden to speak to members of another caste. In Belize, the Garifuna people from the Caribbean Islands and certain Maya groups who moved into Belize after Mexico's Caste War in the mid-1800s are examples of sandwich cultures with very specialized customs (Foster, 1987). They have maintained their language and many ancient customs into the space age.

The task of creating a nation is made easier when its citizens already feel a sense of belonging together. If no feeling of commonality exists, unity must become an important national issue after a nation is formed (Weiner, 1972). A nation can be classified as the largest community that commands a citizen's loyalty, the end product or outer limits of a sense of solidarity between individuals (Emerson, 1972).

Belize was culturally and ethnically very diverse at the time of independence. Government leaders wanted to create a stronger sense of unity and build national solidarity. At independence in 1981, the Belizean population was about 40% Creole; 33% Mestizo; 8% Garifuna, often referred to as Black Caribs; 7% Maya; 4% white; with a remainder made up of indigenous groups, East Indians, Chinese, Syrians and others (Bolland, 1986). Creole and Spanish were important languages, although an estimated 80% of the population could speak English. Like many countries emerging from colonialism, Belize was a multicultural, multi-ethnic society.

Conceptualizing Communication

The conceptual approach of apertures and insulators can be applied to the arrival of Belizean independence. According to Atal (1985), apertures and insulators operate on both internal and external communications. For Belize, national independence increased contacts with many nations,

but worsened relations with neighboring Guatemala, which shared the longest border with Belize. Guatemala also held a claim of sovereignty over Belize that dated back to 18th century treaties between the British and Spanish empires (Dobson, 1973). Guatemalan maps showed Belize as a part of Guatemala and invasions were threatened on several occasions. The Guatemalan claim served as an insulator because Guatemala was the only nation not to recognize Belizean independence. The two nations had no diplomatic relations until 1991 (Europa World Year Book, 1994).

Independence continued the Belizean isolation from what could have been its most important neighbor, Guatemala, and increased outward contacts with more distant countries such as the United States. Americans in particular sought advantageous business opportunities in the new nation. For example, two Houston businessmen and Coca-Cola subsidiary Minute Maid orange juice bought into a 686,000-acre tract of Belizean land in 1985 when the owner encountered tax problems. The land sale involved about one-eighth of the total land area of Belize (Petch, 1986). The transfer of control of one-eighth of the nation's land area to American businessmen obviously functioned as an "aperture" to outside interests.

Isolated externally from Central America by its use of English and internally by a rough terrain with few roads, Belize was saddled with poor communications. For many

years, it had looked to Great Britain and the United States for trade and external assistance (Barry, 1989). One historian said that in cultural terms, Belize was really a displaced part of the Caribbean and a part of Central America "in only a geographic sense" (Bolland, 1986, p. xi). Like many former colonial countries, Belize had to build a national identity after colonialism, from determining foreign policy to designing a flag. A major government task was communicating to Belizeans and to the rest of the world what the new nation was all about.

Defining the National Identity Process

Assessing whether individual media exposure and dependency is related to the national identity of Belizeans requires an operational definition of national identity. Dictionaries define the word *national* as "representative of the nation as a whole," and *identity* as "the state of being identical." Such definitions are problematic in characterizing the national identity of Belize, where individuals represent many ethnic and language groups. The "nation as a whole" is a nation of diversity, not dominated by any particular ethnic group.

A dictionary definition of *nationality* covers "a body of people having the same traditions, language, or ethnic origin, and forming a nation." Again, this straightforward definition of nationality applies to the problem at hand only in the "nation forming" sense, the idea that a Belizean

is someone who lives in Belize. Even though Belizeans may not share the same language or ethnic origins, they can be said to have formed a nation. Thus, the dictionary definition of what constitutes *nationality* moves closer to defining national identity in Belize.

In a very thorough discussion of identification theory, Bloom (1990) emphasized that national identity is more than an identification by others that a certain nation exists. Instead, a sense of national identity requires a psychological process that produces a general identification with a nation:

> National identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols--have internalized the symbols of the nation--so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to, or the possibility of enhancement of, those symbols of national identity. (Bloom, 1990, p. 52)

Bloom asserted that his operational definition of national identity as a psychological process provided a clear methodological base for predicting that a mass of individuals will act as a unit in a situation of shared identity. Bloom's definition creates doubt about whether Belizeans have gone through a condition of mass identification with national symbols.

Using the United States as an example, some historians have argued that U.S. citizens did not develop a truly "American" identity until after the Civil War, more than 90

years after proclaiming national independence (e.g., Unger, 1992). Belize has faced few national threats during its short period of national independence. It has experienced no wars, revolutions, major civil disturbances, or great national victories over foreign or domestic threats. The lingering threat to national sovereignty posed by Guatemala's claim to Belize never has materialized and appears to have been settled by negotiations in 1991, although some disagreements remain. Elections have been peaceful, and democratic changes in national leadership have been smooth.

Unlike the United States or the former Soviet Union, Belize was not forged in a revolution won by force of arms. In a new nation with several ethnic groups and languages and a rather peaceful history, national identity may be quite low. Citizens may identify with their town, their ethnic group, their region, or their country of origin in the case of immigrants, rather than with the nation of Belize. One Belizean writing about the sense of nationalism and identity in her country said the feeling differs from the "melting pot" emphasis found in American history. Instead of the "melting pot," Belizeans adopt a sense of belonging to a nation while maintaining their ethnic background, diversity, and cultural traditions (Heusner, 1987).

In new nations, the psychological process of identity develops a national consciousness that slowly evolves into a

"sense of oneness which comes from a community of aspiration, response and action" (Constantino, 1978, p. 25). While the process is going on, citizens can have nationality with little national identity because many new nations were created by colonial powers who simply drew map boundaries for political or military reasons. The people inside the boundaries may have little in common beyond their nationality.

Emerson (1972) mapped out a series of steps along the road to nationalism, political unification, assimilation, and identity. A brief summary of his main points outlines some steps in the psychological journey toward unity:

1. Subjection to a common government.
2. The growth of a single communications network.
3. An educational system based on a common body of ideas.
4. A single common language used by government.
5. A common body of law and a common administrative system.
6. Consolidation of the political system to build an integrated economy.
7. A government that reflects a common cultural pattern brought to bear on all people. (p. 78)

The steps Emerson outlined in the process toward national unity generally apply to Belize, although a single communications network may not be in place at this time if the mass media are included. The Belizean postal, telephone, telegraph and radio systems fit the criteria, but the television system does not. Belizean television exists, but it is not yet nationwide, and local material is in short supply. Belizean television has a national character, but

does not have a national audience at this time because many homes cannot receive it. The television system has remained overwhelmingly American.

Belize has taken the other steps Emerson listed, including the use of English as a common government language. Only in the case of Emerson's seventh step, a government that reflects a common cultural pattern brought to bear on all people, can it be argued that the psychological journey toward unity clearly is incomplete. As a country not yet 15 years old, Belize seems to have no common national cultural pattern.

Foreign Media and Communication

Atal (1985) theorized that mass media opened apertures for information to conservative, isolated groups like the "sandwich cultures" that were outside the national mainstream--groups like the rural Maya or the Garifuna of southern Belize. The arrival of television in Belize theoretically had that effect. Through their satellite dish aperture, Belizeans saw a world much wealthier than the one they knew, one their first Prime Minister worried might create unhappiness at home (Brogdon, 1986).

Television offered an important mass medium for Belizeans. The language of the broadcasts was English, the official language of Belize. Foreign television provided an expensive service the government admittedly could not afford (Brogdon, 1986). Conceptually, foreign television in Belize

may be seen as a vehicle for increased communication from the outside world and as a possible means of lessening language divisions within Belize. Realistically, it was not the vehicle the government of Belize would have chosen for improving communication and language skills.

The government favored slower development of a national television system, a development that would have been limited by the great expense of television and the small amount of funding available. These financial limitations would have produced a different television system than that in place today. Rather than developing television at some future time, the government allowed a "free" but foreign system to spread throughout the country.

Conservative institutions such as schools, churches, government, community organizations, and universities provide socialization in traditional societies. In Belize, schools helped create feelings of nationality, teaching students their history, and training them to respect national symbols such as the Belizean flag. In 1980, some 92% of the adult population of Belize was literate, and 85% of school age children attended primary school (Bolland, 1986).

Churches also provided support for national identity through assistance to education. More than half the nation's primary schools are managed by church representatives, including Catholics, Anglicans, and

Methodists. The remaining schools are government-operated, but all receive some government support.

Despite the importance of conservative institutions, media can play a key role in political socialization within emerging nations. One study of 18 countries in Africa found that the mass media ranked first on a list of what were termed "cultural structures," with radio as the most important medium (N'Diaye, 1981, p. 27). The study's author found that cultural structures such as media, universities, museums, and national archives were intimately bound up with language.

Language allows citizens to "seize, understand and interpret the genius of a people by way of its philosophy, religion and its psychological and moral characteristics" (N'Diaye, 1981, p. 14). Thus, the language of a country's mass media is very important in creating or maintaining identity because mass media can promote a national language. N'Diaye wrote that the role of cultural structures is to promote national identity by encouraging the use of a shared national language.

The African study of cultural development found that a national university was the second most important cultural structure after the mass media (N'Diaye, 1981). This finding applies to a study of media and national identity in Belize because for many years, higher education meant sending students out of the country. Belize now has a

teachers' college, an agriculture college, a technical college, and the University College of Belize for the training of some teachers and health care workers, but no liberal arts universities. Many students still have to leave Belize to seek a degree in their chosen field.

Without the cultural competition of a national university or a national television system, the foreign television structure in Belize was free to operate in a way that has been characterized in other nations as a "counterweight to the established authorities" (Pool, 1979, p. 124). Shortly after the first television broadcasting began, the Belizean government declared satellite broadcasting illegal, but failed to act to prevent it (Brogdon, 1986; Weaver, 1993). While government inaction continued, television entered a period of expansion. Television broadcasting, with or without the Belizean government's blessing, continued to operate alongside the government's radio service, public schools, and churches as an important cultural structure in Belize.

Some communication scholars would argue that television environments like that of Belize offer evidence of violations of national sovereignty by the United States (Nordenstreng & Schiller, 1979). U.S. laws also failed to cover the importation of satellite signals that was going on in Belize (Weaver, 1993). The sovereignty question could have been answered by the new Belizean government through

stronger action to control imported television signals and satellite broadcasting, but effective action was not taken.

Under a different type of government, the early satellite entrepreneurs in Belize might have been shut down, but the constitution guaranteed free expression. Perhaps the Belizean constitution and system of government also can be classified as apertures that created openings in the political system. In summary, looking at the search for national identity in Belize as a communication problem offers a helpful conceptual approach to issues of mass media and national identity.

National Identity and Young People

Conceptualizing national identity formation as a communication process is particularly applicable to young people, the audience chosen for this research. Through their many hours in school and the active influences of peers, parents, teachers, churches, and the media, young people are more intensely involved than adults in socialization processes. The teenage years are a time for examining ideas about the world through social institutions such as the public schools. Teenagers also struggle to achieve and prioritize an assortment of individual needs.

The Need for Identity

According to Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, the primary human need is (1) physiological, followed by (2) safety needs, (3) love needs, (4) self-esteem needs, and (5)

self-actualization needs. The need for safety includes a longing for the absence of physical threats as well as a need for a predictable world. A feeling of national identity meets some of the requirements for living in a safe and predictable world.

A safe world also creates the opportunity to fulfill additional needs for self-esteem and self-actualization. National identity construction builds on a variety of factors included in the need for safety and security. The influences of institutions in society help build national identity through a process broadly characterized as political socialization.

A major point in much of the political socialization literature involving young people is their search for stability in the social system through companionship and social organizations (e.g., Yogev & Shapira, 1990). Renshon (1977) has argued that political socialization can begin at a very early age, although he criticized the lack of longitudinal studies to illustrate children's opinion change over time. Along with family, schools, and peer groups, the mass media play a role in acquainting young people with the operations, norms, and mores of their world (Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970).

National Identity and Personal Identity

The writings of psychoanalyst Erik Erikson, the first to popularize the phrase "identity crisis," addressed the

need for stability during adolescence. Erikson (1968) found adolescence a time when individuals integrate expectations of society with personal needs as they pass through an "identity crisis" and realize the demands society will place on them as adults:

> The final identity, then, as fixed at the end of adolescence is superordinated to any single identification with individuals of the past: it includes all significant identifications, but it also alters to make a unique and a reasonably coherent whole of them. (pp. 112-113)

Erickson's point supports the idea that identity construction is a problem of communication. Young people form a picture of themselves, a final identity, in adolescence. The picture includes their view of themselves, their place in society and in their country, their opportunities, and their potential place in the world.

For many Belizeans, deciding what "being Belizean" means is not clear in the 1990s. By the late 1980s, an estimated 50,000 to 65,000 Belizeans, one of every five citizens, were living in the United States (Barry, 1989). In addition, about 25,000 people from neighboring countries entered Belize in the first three years after independence, one of the largest inflows of population in the history of Belize. Government statements indicate that the twin pressures of immigration from Central America and emigration to the United States have muddled the definition of what being Belizean means ("Immigration issue," 1987).

Identification theory proposes that as life circumstances change, individuals may create new identifications for themselves (Bloom, 1990). Young Belizeans preparing to go out into the world face changing life circumstances. They may create new identifications with what they see as their future. On the other hand, existing feelings of Belizean identity may be difficult to change because individuals seek to protect and enhance their identity.

As Erikson (1968) points out, identity maintenance depends on the support a young person receives "from the collective sense of identity characterizing the social groups significant to him: his class, his nation, his culture" (p. 89). The drive to enhance and protect identifications can strengthen ties either inside or outside a person's country. Satellite-delivered television offers one example of how adolescents can identify with a lifestyle outside Belize. A poem written by a 16-year-old Belizean illustrates the way some teenagers see life in the United States:

> Have you ever sat down and watch T.V.
> Well, it has happened to me.
> I don't smoke weed
> but I get a natural high
> watching the Jeffersons
> get a piece of the pie.
> Do you know that it's ABC
> getting addicted to watching T.V.
> ("Television," by Karl Burgess,
> cited in Wilk, 1993, p. 229).

This Belizean teenager's poem hints at how the process of identification with people outside national borders may operate. With about 29% of the population of Belize now classified as Creole (Central Statistical Office, 1991), it is possible for young blacks in Belize to cheer when black Americans get "a piece of the pie" on U.S. television.

Identification theory addresses the issue of identification with cultural symbols such as a common language or observance of cultural customs such as holidays. This process may include almost anything that promotes a common psychological bond (Bloom, 1990). For example, sharing a common language with friends and relatives in Mexico or the United States can be a powerful factor in identification for young people in Belize. Because locally produced Belizean television and imported U.S. programs share the same language, American programs are well received. Spanish-speaking Belizeans also enjoy radio and television programs from neighboring Mexico.

In the relative absence of Belizean national symbols on television, young people may find symbols of success and stability in the foreign television characters they identify with. Television's *Jeffersons* may be identified with relatives who have gone to the United States. One survey of Belizean high school students reported that 59% said they got "most" of their information about the United States from television (Elliott, 1992). Characters on U.S. television

programs may act as symbols of successful young people in the United States, a country Belizeans can "adopt" through television.

Determining whether media can and do influence individual perceptions of national identity demands more than simply knowing that American television exists in Belize and presents content unlike Belizean media. The relationships between individual viewers, radio listeners, and readers in Belize and the media content they use can help answer questions about influence. Dependency theory provides a framework for studying and attempting to measure media influence on individuals.

Media Dependency Theory

Individual media system dependency theory provides the theoretical basis for this project (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). Media dependency theory originally defined "a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party" (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976, p. 6). The theory focused at first on audiences, hypothesizing that demand for information grows along with the level of conflict and change in society. The theory also proposed that the need for information goes beyond simple media use; audiences come to depend on specialized media for specialized information.

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) argued that many researchers had failed to determine if media had widespread effects or very little influence because of faulty conceptualizations of causes and effects. According to their view, other researchers had not accounted for the complex relationships between media, audiences, and society. In a complex and difficult society, audiences might depend on media to define situations, construct social reality, help form attitudes, determine agendas, and expand and alter beliefs and values.

Dependency theory soon recognized the individual's role more clearly. Theory refinements reflected a focus on individual media dependency, the perspective that guides this research. The newer emphasis lay with the individual's desire for social understanding and efforts to gain information about the social environment by using a "message dissemination resource" (Ball-Rokeach, 1985, p. 487). Media dependency theory hypothesized that individuals expose themselves to messages based on expectations about these messages' relevance and utility. Relevance and utility perceptions were influenced by the media themselves and by interpersonal networks (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984).

The media promote perceptions of message utility by advertising the content of their messages in advance. For example, a television station may promote its weather,

sports, or stock market coverage to appeal to specialized audience segments. Interpersonal influences on perceptions of message utility occur when individuals or social groups place a high value on message content. For example, young people might find that watching television shows about the dating behavior and customs of other young people would be quite relevant to their own lives. They might be influenced in this decision by interpersonal networking with other young people who found such information useful.

Media dependency relationships are based on individual goals and the resources available in a society. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) list media system resources as information gathering, information processing, and information dissemination. The information may be news or entertainment. More recent statements of the theory emphasize the complex nature of media effects, which may be the result of particular media content, individual predispositions to attend to certain messages, or the result of cumulative exposure to a wide variety of media (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989)

By controlling information gathering, processing, and dissemination, a media system operates from a position of power over resources, while media users operate from a position of dependency on media to fulfill their information goals. Media dependency theory hypothesizes that the more

functions a medium serves in a society, the greater the individual and societal needs for that medium.

Defining the relationship between the individual and that person's media dependencies is critical, according to DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989). Media dependency theory outlines specific ways to measure individual relationships with media. For individuals, media systems meet three broad goals: (1) understanding of both self and the social world; (2) orientation, which includes learning about styles of dress and interactions such as handling situations with others; and (3) play, including self-entertainment and social activities.

A person may use a variety of media to learn about tomorrow's weather, for example, but probably depends on a single source for a decision to either carry an umbrella or leave the umbrella at home. This single source for weather information may be the page of a newspaper showing a weather map. The newspaper weather map may be chosen even after the person has heard and seen several national and local weather reports on radio and television. In this example, the information depended on for a decision about a specific behavior came from a single source, the newspaper.

As society becomes more complex, mass media serve more information functions that can be very behavior specific. Dependency theory hypothesized that dependency on a medium increases as the medium's important functions increase.

Certain "situational contingencies" (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984, p. 12) such as the number of media that fulfill the same function can affect message exposure, but where these factors do not interfere, perceptions of relevance and utility will prevail.

Other researchers who have examined studies based on media dependency theory have found that they deal with a variety of dependent variables that are not clearly comparable. McLeod and McDonald (1985) advised researchers to note how much time was spent with various media, what particular content was chosen, the amount of reliance on specific media, and the motivations for media use (p. 6). The present study attempts to follow this approach.

By focusing on individual information goals, the early dependency theorists acknowledged that most people follow a problem-solving strategy for media use and that they can articulate rational reasons for their media use patterns (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984, p. 6). The belief that media use is based on problem-solving motivations that are understood and can be explained is a key point for this research, which used a survey instrument to gather such data from young people. The young people questioned in this research were asked about which media they used to accomplish certain goals, and which media they depended on for entertainment, or for local, national, and international information.

Dependency Theory Refinements

After more than a decade of refinements and testing of media dependency theory, the authors described it as an "ecological" theory which could explain a wide variety of media behaviors at all levels of society. Dependency theory continued to examine three sources of media influence: (1) society and the media, (2) the media and the audience, and (3) society and the audience (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1989, p. 303). The original emphasis on media functions remained the same; the media served to gather or create information, process the information, and disseminate it to audience members. The greatest change in the theory was its focus on the way individuals--rather than audiences--form media dependency patterns which may lead to media effects.

The theory explained relationships between individuals and large media systems, or with parts of the system such as radio, newspapers, or television by stating that it is the "relationship that carries the burden of the explanation" of varying media effects (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p. 303). In other words, one person may be very radio dependent, while another person's goals lead to heavy dependence on several media forms. For example, Hemingway's solitary fisherman in *The Old Man and the Sea* followed his beloved American baseball teams through the newspaper. In contrast, a modern-day stockbroker may depend on a variety of information sources during different parts of the day, or

the stockbroker may consult several very different information sources during a single hour.

The relationship of the person to each media source within the media system defines the expected exposure to and dependency on messages and the expected effects of those messages. By extension, dependency theory can be applied to specific content carried by a medium. Some people may depend on television news, television entertainment, newspaper horoscopes, or popular music shows on local radio to fill varying information needs. For example, some young people in Mexico said they learned useful information about how to dress for a date and how to ask someone for a date by watching the U.S. television program *Beverly Hills 90210* (Elliott, 1994).

Media Dependency and Effects

While this research is a study of associations between media and identity and not a media effects study, some dependency literature focusing on effects provides useful information for this project. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) hypothesize varying media dependency relationships according to the goals of the individual viewer. This distinction in media dependency relationships guides the present research in Belize.

As an example of differential dependency, a person who watches television primarily for entertainment or "play" may look for and receive a message very different from someone

who watches the same program with a goal of "understanding" (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p. 311). The goal of understanding also may encourage different media use according to individual desires for understanding specific information. Thus, a young Belizean who plans to seek a university education in the United States may report media exposure and dependency patterns that are quite different from another survey participant who plans to attend a technical college in Belize.

Dependency researchers hypothesize different media effects according to the goals of individual media use. For this reason, different relationships between media dependency and national identity are expected according to individual goals. This theoretical approach is similar to the functional approach that classifies mass media functions as (1) surveying the environment, (2) correlating events within the environment, (3) transmitting culture or social heritage, and (4) entertainment (Anderson & Meyer, 1975).

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) also take a somewhat functional approach to media effects, hypothesizing a different degree of effects for active media selectors and casual observers. Some individuals use media to achieve understanding, orientation, or play goals, while others encounter media messages only incidentally. Those more intensely involved with media are more likely to show cognitive effects on perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, or

values. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) caution that the way individual audience members think and feel about media messages--as measured by cognitive and affective change--may not be linked to behavioral change, but high media dependency does increase the probability of behavioral effects.

Other researchers support the claim for differential effects according to observable media use patterns, classifying viewers as either goal-directed "instrumental" active audience members or "ritual" passive viewers (Kippax & Murray, 1980; Rubin, 1984). In general, researchers have hypothesized that the stronger the individual dependency on a given communication medium, the greater the likelihood that the medium will affect cognitions or understanding of the social world through a model of exposure, arousal or interest, and involvement, followed by measurable effects (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Rubin & Windahl, 1986).

Media system dependency theory proposes a relationship between the effects of a particular message or a specific medium and the perceived utility of the message or medium. This approach to media system influence is used in the present study of media exposure and dependency among young people in Belize. The rapid expansion of television in Belize indicates an audience appreciation for its utility.

The presence of television, its high audience penetration, and the audience acceptance of Belizean

television's foreign, typically American, content seem to indicate a powerfully felt need for information about the world beyond Belize. Whether the relevance and utility of the Belizean viewer's exposure and dependency can be characterized as a need for information--instrumental viewing--or the simple escapism of "ritual" viewing (Rubin, 1984) is not known. The characterization of dependency as "a relationship in which the satisfaction of needs or the attainment of goals by one party is contingent upon the resources of another party" (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976, p. 6) seems particularly appropriate to Belize, where foreign television filled a local media vacuum.

This research seeks to determine if identity with Belize correlates with media use and media dependency. The answers to these questions offer the possibility of a new perspective on national identity formation in the almost 100 new nations created after World War II (Nordenstreng & Schiller, 1979). Because it often is true that "the media are American," (Tunstall, 1977) many of the world's people may identify more closely with a "psychic America" or with some form of "global citizenship" than with their own country. In a new nation such as Belize, personal identifications as "global citizens" or "television Americans" are expected to be more prevalent than in nations with a longer history. Young Belizeans may identify with other places through television and other foreign media.

Applying Dependency Theory Within Belize

Correlating specific media exposure and dependency behaviors with individual goals, and especially with feelings of national identity, is the approach used in the present study in Belize. This research attempts to determine how and in what situations media and interpersonal systems are used for either information or entertainment. These functions are especially important to young people who are forming their ideas about the world and orienting themselves to the society in which they live.

As applied to Belize, dependency on media may help young people understand the social world outside the country, the social world within Belize, or to create an entertainment and fantasy world to escape to. In general, the greater the need for media information, the greater the probability that the information supplied will change a person's knowledge, attitudes, or behavior.

Media dependency theory places the individual media user in the forefront for data analysis. The individual approach suggested by media dependency theory will be followed in this research. Other scholars have found that a focus on individual viewers can be very productive. After analyzing television's impact in Europe, Paterson (1993) suggested a "bottom up" (p. 4) approach to television studies related to national identity questions, analyzing the ways individuals determine their place in society by

learning from specific media sources. This project uses the bottom up approach, focusing on individual relationships to media systems. The unit of analysis is the individual media user and that person's relationship to each medium of communication.

Adolescents and Media Use

Television seems to influence some young viewers toward a stronger sense of global awareness, a central focus of this research (Granzberg, 1982). One reason for television's power to increase global awareness may be that a great many television programs originate from outside national borders, giving viewers a window on the world. Young people in other countries may be influenced by the content carried by American television, especially when they use English in daily conversation (Tan, Tan, & Tan, 1987).

Because of the international focus of satellite television, young Belizeans are expected to use foreign television for information about educational or job opportunities outside their country. They also may use television to share common experiences with relatives and friends living in the United States. Another television use might be to learn about the behavior and customs of other young people around the world.

In general, young people are very motivated media users, among the most likely viewers to watch more than one television channel at once, "zap" out of commercials, and

rent VCR tapes to control the content of their viewing (Greenberg, 1988). Young viewers in Belize are expected to be very active in searching for content, using television as a surveillance mechanism for learning about world events, behaviors, styles, customs, and events affecting relatives or friends who live in other countries.

Mass media researchers typically consider young people among the population groups most vulnerable to the influence of television because it is assumed that many of their ideas about the world are not fully formed and are thus subject to change after exposure to television portrayals of life (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Huston, et al., 1992). Young people, for example, may choose to watch only television programs that feature young actors or information about teenagers in other countries to learn about how their roles are performed by other peer groups. Teenagers often search for role models in style, dress, and behavior in the foreign cultures portrayed on television (McClellan, 1994).

Young people who have the highest exposure to and dependency on television may feel that they are part of a "global youth society," and register lower scores on ratings of national identity than light viewers. In this research, television exposure and dependency are considered along with a number of interpersonal communication and media use measures. Learning how young Belizeans use their information sources provides a test of how dependency theory

may explain correlations between "global" or "national" identities. One criticism of many media studies is that they examine reliance on only one or two media systems such as television or radio. A comparison of other media and interpersonal information use and reliance should offer a broader base for dependency theory conclusions (J. Straubhaar, personal communication, April 8, 1995).

In summary, young audience members who are heavily dependent on Belize radio, local newspapers, and magazines about Belize are expected to be more locally oriented in their media use, less global in their interests, and strongly associated with a "Belizean" identity. Those who are dependent on foreign media--especially satellite television--are expected to be more "global" in outlook and to report national identity measures that are somewhat lower than their peers. Research in other countries provides support for these assumptions.

International Mass Media Studies

Studies of mass media influence in countries around the world offer a solid basis for the present research questions addressed in Belize. Such studies are particularly applicable where countries share a common language with the United States, or where nations have been heavily exposed to American mass media. Because the United States is the world's largest exporter of television content, studies that focus on U.S. television influence are abundant and diverse

(Dunnett, 1990). The studies cited here center on the issue of mass media--especially television--as a force for either national or global identity, a central question of this research.

Research Trends

Mass media researchers note two general trends involving national identity issues and television. First, researchers argue that television influence supports an identity beyond national borders, creating a kind of global citizen who is conversant with a common technical, visual effects language (Snow, 1983). This global language is one of pictures more than words, freeing viewers from many of the constraints of separation by language. Hand-held video games are an example of visual communication that does not depend on language.

Other research views television as a reinforcement for resurgent ethnic, language, tribal, or religious identifications (e.g., McLuhan & Powers, 1989). McQuail (1987) has written at length about this key theory issue, concluding that one of the major communication questions still to be settled is whether media act as a force for social unity or fragmentation. Media can promote decentralization and fragmentation, or operate as a force for unity, "nation-building, modernization, [and] political strength" (McQuail, 1987, p. 304).

Studying global television reveals a clash of theoretical models involving social unity or fragmentation. Improved communications and increased access to television around the world bring the Western model of national identity based on law and rights into conflict with other models dominated by language, ethnicity, and customs (Paterson, 1993). The global message flow adds some pressure for people in developing societies to change traditional behaviors and attitudes (Inkeles, 1969).

Changes in identity may result from certain traumatic developments that upset basic cultural elements and ideas of collective destiny (Smith, 1991). These traumatic developments can stem from a variety of sources, from the sudden restructuring of Cold War alignments and East-West spheres of influence to the slower passage from traditional to more modern societies (Lerner, 1958). Global television messages are one source of information about other nations and about new ways of expressing personal identity.

Individual country studies indicate that different media have different influences on feelings of national identity. Some media may promote a more global or outwardly directed point of view than others (Barnett & McPhail, 1980; Martin-Barbero, 1988; Odhiambo, 1991; Subervi-Velez, 1986). In general, radio and newspapers carry a heavier local emphasis, while television and films tend to be more global in emphasis. Government regulatory policies also influence

how media function to support national identity. Research into audience receptivity to imported programming offers models for additional regulatory guidelines in countries where foreign television is now arriving or where foreign media flows are increasing.

Television in the Developing World

Large parts of the Asian market, which includes about one-third of the world's 1.4 billion television sets, were opened to Western television programming only recently (Auletta, 1993). Television penetration continues to grow among India's population of 882 million, where the government has experimented with combinations of imported and domestically produced programming (Singhal & Rogers, 1988). China struggles to maintain control of its television marketplace as millions of Chinese in search of program diversity buy satellite dishes which the government has sought to ban (Sharma, 1993).

In Africa, one of the greatest challenges in a very large continent with diverse ethnic groups is finding a way to finance television programming that affords at least some representation of actual audience interests (Martin, 1991; Odhiambo, 1991). In much of the Arab world, television content that challenges national priorities must be tailored to fit the cultural sensitivities of politically conservative governments (Boyd, 1993). In all these situations, the conflict between global television flows and

national priorities plays a role in how governments deal with the television broadcasts their citizens are allowed to receive.

Research in countries where foreign television, particularly U.S. television, has become a national issue shows how governments deal with messages from outside their borders. Different government regulatory strategies can produce a variety of media outcomes. In addition, the audience and media interactions in each of the countries studied provide comparisons with the goals of this research.

Canada

Canada has a history of exposure to American television and a pattern of U.S. program penetration that almost rivals that of Belize, although Canada has long enjoyed its own national television system. Following a socialization perspective, Barnett and McPhail (1980), studied the relationship between U.S. television and national identity among university students in Ottawa, Canada. The Canadian study found that the more U.S. television young Canadians watched, the less they perceived themselves as Canadian and the more they perceived themselves as American.

Barnett and McPhail (1980) used metric multidimensional scaling (MMDS), a data collection method that converts the perceived distances between items such as "Canada and yourself" (p. 228) into a series of loadings on several dimensions. The dimensions examined were students'

attitudes toward Canada, the United States, the Canadian media, the U.S. media, and the students' sense of national identity. The students reported watching more Canadian than U.S. television, but found American programs more entertaining. Students who watched U.S. television most frequently and who watched a high percentage of American shows saw themselves as significantly more American than Canadian, while the opposite was true for those who watched more Canadian television.

The significance of the relationship between American television use and a sense of American identity among Canadian college students may be confounded by the study location. Ottawa is only 60 miles from the U.S. border and just a few hours' drive from Buffalo and Rochester, New York, and Detroit, Michigan. Barnett and McPhail acknowledged that other factors may have accounted for at least part of the apparent influence of television. Interpersonal communication, visits to the United States, and conversations with American visitors to Canada were among the factors that reportedly influenced perceptions about the United States.

The authors reported that 47% of the prime-time programming available in the survey city of Ottawa was produced in the United States. They suggested that Canada might consider limiting the amount of U.S. television to counter its influence on national identity. In the years

since the Barnett snd McPhail (1980) study, the Canadian government has acted to limit U.S. television programming. The 1994 Canadian television schedule carried the greatest amount of Canadian-produced programming in the country's history. Canadian shows made up 90% of the nationwide prime time schedule. Only five American shows aired during prime time in Canada in 1994 (Harris, 1994).

Also in Canada, some relatively powerful cultural effects were recorded when television arrived in the remote Hudson Bay area in the early 1970s. The research in Canada by Granzberg (1982) involved a situation that can be compsred with the sudden arrival of U.S. television in Belize. After exposure to television, members of the Algonkian Indian tribes in Canada were more likely than other Canadians to believe that television accurately portrayed the "real" world.

Young people exposed to television were more likely to reduce their use of the native Cree language at home and more likely to act violently during play (Granzberg, 1982). The author reported that some young Algonkians adopted phrases such as "sit on it" that were made popular by the television character Fonzie in the American series "Happy Days." Other children reportedly tried to copy actions and behaviors learned from television and often were addressed by other children as though they were characters on the "Happy Days" television show.

Mexico

Government regulatory policies also can require an emphasis on national identity, as is the case in Mexico. In contrast with the arrival of television in Belize, Mexican television began with a burst of nationalism. Television arrived in Mexico on August 31, 1950, and broadcast the Mexican president's state of the union speech the next day (Alisky, 1988). By the 1970s, the Mexican government was funding television stations for some universities and operating a nationwide television network. Mexico's broadcast law includes a specific charge to broadcasters to "contribute to the raising of the cultural level of the people, conserving national characteristics, customs of the nation and traditions, and exalting the values of Mexican nationality" (Alisky, 1988, p. 216).

Mexico followed the United States model of allowing private entrepreneurs to create television services because of the enormous expense of creating a television network, but reserved the right to demand up to 12.5% of all airtime from all stations to broadcast what the government called public service messages. Mexican television also produced a series of development-oriented television soap operas in the late 1970s that featured family planning and adult literacy messages (Singhal & Rogers, 1988).

Despite the public service emphasis written into Mexican broadcast law, government efforts to ensure a

television service that reflected national values and national identity never have been successful in Mexico. American influence over Mexican mass media has remained a problem for the Mexican government. Entrepreneurs took advantage of inexpensive but popular American television shows, airing large amounts of U.S. programming for many years (Tunstall, 1977). Even in the 1990s, American stations broadcasting in English outnumbered Mexican stations on cable outlets in some Mexican television markets (Elliott, 1994).

Guyana and the Caribbean

Instead of following the Mexican example of requiring an emphasis on national identity through television, Belize seemed to parallel the example of television development that occurred in Guyana. As the only English-speaking country in South America and a former British colony, Guyana shared a South American status similar to that of Belize in Central America. After proclaiming the country a republic in 1970, the Guyanan government took control of radio broadcasting and planned to build a television service based on a development journalism model.

By the early 1980s, the government of Guyana had not developed a television service, but wealthy citizens had begun to buy television sets and VCRs set to North American technical standards. In 1982, just after television arrived in Belize, satellite rebroadcasting of pirated American

signals began in Guyana at a time when the country had no broadcast legislation (Sidel, 1990).

The Guyanese government did not begin broadcasting its own programs until 1988 and then aired only 10-minute newscasts of local affairs. Locally produced programming filled only about two hours a week in 1988; the rest of the schedule was dominated by U.S. programs the government of Guyana had tried to avoid (Sidel, 1990). Guyana is an example of a country that allowed market forces to dominate national television broadcasting by failing to make decisions. Belize repeated Guyana's television experience during the same decade for roughly the same reasons.

Surveys in a number of Caribbean nations show that U.S. television operates as a window on the world that overwhelms competition from locally owned stations with a weak economic base (Lent, 1991). Quite often, the result is a decrease in local programming and increases up to almost 100% in the American programming content of some Caribbean island television. The foreign programs may contribute to increased curiosity about countries like the United States, feelings of a need for change, unfavorable comparisons between the home country and wealthy nations, and a greater awareness of and attraction for customs, consumer products, and cultural artifacts that originate beyond national borders (Skinner, 1984).

Increasingly, national leaders realize that television programs created and produced in the national language are an important means of maintaining cultural sovereignty in the face of exposure to the global television system. Locally produced programming carrying accepted national themes competes very well against imported programs (Cohen, 1988). Where nations develop strong broadcasting systems that offer local entertainment and news programming, imported programs and foreign content can be relegated quickly to less-watched hours or pushed off the air (Kottak, 1991). Some Latin American countries once dominated by American programs have created strong television industries.

Latin America

The television system in Brazil offers an example of what can be done by an ambitious and well-funded local broadcasting industry. A tightly written government media policy has enabled Rede Globo, the national network of Brazil, to dominate the Brazilian television market. Rede Globo holds a nightly audience of up to 80 million viewers. Audience surveys indicate that all of the favorite shows are native productions (Kottak, 1991). Although Brazilian television is highly commercial, the broadcasting laws also mandate some information and education programming in the weekly schedule (Oliveira, 1988).

The popularity of Brazil's programming follows a pattern found in countries around the world; where

nationally produced programs are available in sufficient supply, the American programming presence usually diminishes (Head, 1985). Television pictures and messages portray a part of each country's national culture, and in almost every culture studied, programming with a strong indigenous appeal will outperform imported content (Luyken, 1991).

On occasion, governments take steps to ensure that their indigenous content is able to compete equally with imported programming. Where that happens, as in Mexico or Canada, or where national advertisers can provide equal competition, as in Brazil, foreign programs enjoy no real advantage and local culture takes precedence. Where governments provide no regulation, or do not enforce existing television regulations, the competition between imported programs and locally produced content can be quite different. The economy of scale enjoyed by television program producers in developed countries who can sell at or below the production costs in other nations may overwhelm local competition and replace local programming (Collins, 1988; Dunnett, 1990).

Scotland

A study of media and national identity in Scotland suggests some of the comparisons between local and national media that may apply in Belize. Like Belize, which has a heavy "Belizean" influence in its radio programming and newspapers, "Scottishness" characterizes Scottish radio

(Meech & Kilborn, 1992). Researchers have found that television and films have much more of an English flavor.

Meech and Kilborn offered no quantitative results in their analysis of Scottish media, but made several instructive points: (1) researchers should use caution in attributing too decisive a role to media; (2) some factors involved in the complex issue of national identity pre-date the modern era of mass communication; and (3) in smaller countries, radio and newspapers are more likely than television or films to focus on issues of national identity because of budget constraints in the larger and more costly media.

In Scotland, the British Broadcasting Corporation allowed regional radio services such as Radio Clyde to enjoy enormous audience popularity by featuring announcers with Scottish accents and programs that focused on distinctly Scottish affairs. Moray Firth Radio, operating in Scotland's far north, can be compared to Radio Belize. It emphasizes community affairs, agricultural information, and rural news, reporting for an audience of about 200,000 widely scattered listeners.

Meech and Kilborn reported that Scottish television failed to match the local emphasis provided by radio. Few programs are produced in Scotland by either the BBC or Scottish television companies. Additional research supports the claim that Scottish radio audiences differ from

television-oriented audiences that may lack a strong sense of national identity (Caughie, 1982). Many Scottish television broadcasts are generally perceived as "English" rather than Scottish (Meech & Kilborn, 1992).

Scottish weekly newspapers are very popular, with household penetration rates of more than 80%. Some newspapers capitalize on their "Scottishness," just as newspapers in Belize promote their nationalistic tone. As these categories of Scottish media illustrate, consumers have access to a variety of media products. In measuring media dependency and its interactions with national identity, researchers need to look at each media type and its source, being careful not to lump "media" together under a single heading.

Belize

Studies of the influence of locally oriented mass media such as radio versus the globally oriented focus of television are especially appropriate to Belize, where no national television broadcasting structure exists. As an English-speaking microstate in a Central American environment of Spanish-speaking countries, Belize has a history of looking to England and the United States for trade and aid. The arrival in 1981 of satellite-transmitted television from the United States was another step in a long history of close relations between Belize and the U.S. that have influenced Belizean life.

American researchers Roser, Snyder, and Chaffee (1986) examined the impact of U.S. television, movies, and news on young people's perceptions of the quality of life in Belize. Specifically, the researchers looked at two categories of forces: the "push" that propels Belizeans from a familiar environment to a new home, and the "pull" of mass media attractions to a new place of residence.

The "push" forces result from personal experience; the "pull" forces may come from interpersonal relations or the mass media. Based on media dependency theory, Roser, Snyder, and Chaffee (1986) hypothesized that foreign media dependency would facilitate the pull to leave home and migrate to another country. The researchers asked a sample of 11-to 19-year-olds about their use of local radio, newspapers and other print media, foreign television, interpersonal contacts, and economic status. Socioeconomic status (SES) was determined by asking the respondents about a number of common consumer items at their homes, such as a telephone, carpeting, record players or cars.

Using regression analysis to measure desire to emigrate, based on (1) SES, (2) interpersonal communication, and (3) U.S. mass media use, the researchers found no simple and clear relationships between media use and willingness to emigrate. All three independent variables were significantly related to emigration, but interpersonal communication with friends or relatives living in or

visiting the U.S. was the strongest predictor. Some 45% of the sample said they would like to live in the United States, but the most common reasons for emigration were to get more education, better job opportunities, or more money, reasons the researchers characterized as "predominantly utilitarian and not obviously related to media content" (Roser, Snyder & Chaffee, 1986, p. 19).

In a later version of their study of mass media and emigration in Belize, Snyder, Roser, and Chaffee (1991) wrote that foreign media influence is affected by a variety of structural, social, and individual variables such as education, sex, age, interpersonal communication and the process of social change going on in the country under study. The key element in a desire to leave one country for another is friends or relatives in the country of choice. Belizean respondents with the strongest desire to emigrate to the United States had many interpersonal sources of information, preferred entertainment programs on television, and read newspapers from the United States.

Oliveira (1986) compared the influence of Mexican and American television viewing on Belizean shopping preferences for foreign versus traditional products. Oliveira's theoretical framework was based on modernization theory and the contextual influences of communication as a social influence in the environment. His survey questioned only bilingual speakers with access to Spanish-language Mexican

television programs from across the border north of Belize or English-language programs rebroadcast from a satellite earth station. Oliveira asked respondents to choose between traditional products such as a fish from the local market or a canned ham, between home made juice or Coca-Cola. One part of his sample was drawn from rural villages, the second part from the small city of Corozal.

In the rural villages, Oliveira (1986) found a significant positive correlation between Mexican television viewing and choice of traditional products, and a negative correlation between U.S. television viewing and selection of traditional products. The same effects were not found in the urban sample. A universal connection between shopping patterns and U.S. versus Mexican television exposure did not appear.

Oliveira reasoned that people who lived in the town, which had a movie theater, supermarkets, telephones and a library, were exposed to a variety of modernizing influences outside of television. Any negative connections between U.S. television and traditionalism in buying habits might have been diluted by exposure to the other modern influences available in the urban setting.

Barnett, Oliveira, and Johnson (1989) explored the relationship between Belizeans' television preferences and their language uses. Creole, English and Spanish are the most common languages in Belize. The researchers surveyed

students from three high schools, asking about their media preferences and exposure, their language use in casual and formal situstions, and their evaluations of U.S. and Mexican television, radio, and print media.

The survey sample was generally multilingual and about twice as likely to watch American television as Mexican television. More of the students reported that they could not speak Creole than the other two language choices, English or Spanish. For bilinguals and multilinguals, the language used in informal situations such as talking with friends wss the best predictor of exposure to foreign television.

These findings suggest that where Mexican and U.S. television are widely available, as in the northern part of Belize, foreign media may heighten language group differences between English and Spanish speakers. Conversely, television may reduce language group differences if the programs are available in only one language. Creole speakers, for example, were forced to choose between English-language or Spanish-language programming.

The study has interesting implications for relating foreign media to language use because Creoles constitute the second largest ethnic group in Belize, about 29% of the population. However, if television programs were available in only one language, they might reduce language group

differences by reducing choice. Barnett et al. (1989) did not explore this option in their research.

Television also can be a force for ethnic and language group assimilation. Subervi-Velez (1986) reported a number of studies in which language, communication, and media use played a role in the assimilation of minorities in the United States. He wrote that most survey research studies take the point of view that the media of the dominant society tend to assimilate ethnic groups. Evidence of media as both an assimilative force and a pluralistic force can be found in Belize. Weekly newspapers take a strongly pluralistic role, appealing to their audiences by reflecting the positions of Belizean political parties. Radio service in Belize is both nationalistic and pluralistic, serving a variety of ethnic and language groups, but always emphasizing the national ethic to "be Belizean."

According to one Belizean writer (Heusner, 1987), the idea of "being Belizean" was popularized by Prime Minister George Price from the 1950s onward:

> His idea that everyone, regardless of race, class, or religion was above everything else a Belizean, and that Belizean culture was the sum total of all the groups, suggested that there was actually a certain commonality in diversity. (p. 4)

This concept of commonality in diversity is reflected in Radio Belize and Friends FM. The government-sponsored Belize radio services follow a Latin American communications model in which radio brought "the birth of nationality and

the coming of modernity" by giving people across regions and provinces their first daily experience with nationhood (Martin-Barbero, 1988, p. 455). The influence of radio in Belize seems to have been largely overlooked by media researchers studying the influence of foreign television. Researchers have reported information about radio use, usually noting that radio is pervasive in Belize (e.g., Snyder, Roser, & Chaffee, 1991), but have largely focused on the influence of foreign television.

One study of communication factors within Belize specifically examined young people's desire for closer international ties (Johnson, Oliveira, & Barnett, 1989). The researchers tested a theoretical construct developed by Rokeach and his colleagues. Rokeach wrote that individuals and groups are attracted to each other by belief congruence, being most attracted by groups perceived as holding beliefs closest to their own (Rokeach, 1980). High school juniors and seniors were asked about their exposure to Mexican and U.S. television and their evaluations of the United States and Belize's Latin American neighbors.

Exposure to U.S. television was related to a desire for closer ties to the United States, but had almost no relationship to closer ties with Belize's Latin American neighbors. One explanation for this finding is that the survey asked only about exposure to *Mexican* television, while trying to relate Mexican television exposure to Latin

American relationships, an obvious problem. Johnson, Oliveira, and Barnett (1989) suggested additional research into interpersonal channels, an approach already reported by Snyder, Roser, and Chaffee (1991) as a key factor in young people's desire to emigrate to the U.S.

Summary

Whether television in Belize promotes a sense of national or international identity is a question that has not been answered. Wilk (1993) suggested that television promotes national identity through commonly shared visual experiences, but Barnett and McPhail (1980) found television linked to American identity in their study of Canadian students. Studies within Belize have offered mixed results. Roser, Snyder, and Chaffee (1986) found that many young people wanted to leave Belize to improve their opportunities for economic success, but the researchers did not find the mass media the motivating factor in such a decision. Instead, the young people gave common sense, utilitarian reasons for wanting to leave Belize that the researchers said were not related to their media exposure.

Other research in Belize has identified media as a unifying force for reasons of language. Barnett, Oliveira, and Johnson (1989) found that young people prefer media content in the language they use in casual conversation, but the second largest ethnic group in Belize--the Creoles--have little choice beyond watching television in English. In

this way, English language television broadcasts serve to unify ethnic groups within Belize. Identifying the media exposure and dependency patterns of young Belizeans is one step toward answering the question of how television operates on identity in Belize.

The Research Question

This literature review has examined national identity formation and maintenance, individual media system dependency theory, and previous media studies to frame the question of whether media dependency and national identity are related. The unusual situation in Belize, where foreign television and national independence have nearly identical lifespans, and where foreign television dominates the television schedule, provides the reason for the question, "are national identity perceptions and media dependency patterns related in an audience of young Belizeans?" Perhaps, as Collins (1990) suggested after studying the television situation in Canada, national identity and foreign media always will be at odds:

> Nationalism is a belief system or ideology that asserts that the interests of a community, a nation, are best served through resistance to transnationalization, and that it is only in (relatively) autonomous, economically self sufficient and culturally homogeneous political units that individuals can protect their interests and feel at home. (p. 11)

On the other hand, Wilk (1993) offers the reasoning that television has helped define what Belizean identity is by offering a nationally received visual comparison with

other societies, something that never was possible before television appeared. Identifying the media exposure and dependency patterns of young Belizeans and how they use media to achieve varying information goals is one step toward answering the question of how television and other media correlate with identity in Belize.

The Research Hypotheses

According to the functions outlined by media dependency theory, individuals learn to depend on media sources for self understanding and social understanding, for orientation to societal norms such as how to handle social situations, and for play and relaxation, either alone or with friends. These dependencies are based on the relevance and utility of the information offered by media and by individual information needs.

In the case of media dependency relationships in Belize, television's heavily international content is expected to counteract or weaken the influences of radio, newspapers and magazines, which are heavily "local" or Belizean. A strongly dependent relationship with television as a source of information and social understanding is expected to correlate with weaker feelings of national identity.

Based on these observations and the theories discussed, a general hypothesis is proposed: exposure to and dependency on foreign media--especially foreign television--will be

negatively correlated with feelings of national identity among young people in Belize while dependency on local media and interpersonal relationships will strengthen identity feelings. From this general hypothesis, 11 sub-hypotheses were developed to test relationships between national identity and media exposure and dependency.

H1: (a) There will be a negative correlation between exposure to television and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

(b) There will be a negative correlation between dependency on television and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

American television programs are available in every part of Belize and dominate the program schedule. Belizean programs such as the national news make up only a small part of the schedule, and Mexican television programs are not available in some parts of the country. Both exposure to and dependency on television are likely to be associated with lower measures of identification with Belize and higher measures of identification with the United States or with a "global identity."

H2: (a) There will be a positive correlation between exposure to Belize newspapers and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

(b) There will be a positive correlation between dependency on Belize newspapers and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

Belize newspapers, with their vitriolic political content, slogans promoting Belizean pride, and coverage of national politics and government programs are expected to be associated with national identity building.

H3: (a) There will be a positive correlation between exposure to Belizean magazines and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

(b) There will be a positive correlation between dependency on Belizean magazines and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

As with newspapers, Belizean magazines focus on development programs, church activities, anti-drug programs, and social concerns. Both exposure to and dependency on these magazines can be expected to correlate with increased measures of national identity.

H4: (a) There will be a positive correlation between exposure to radio programs originating in Belize and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

(b) There will be a positive correlation between dependency on radio programs originating in Belize and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

Exposure to and dependence on radio are likely to correlate with national identity because of Belize radio's

strong emphasis on local and national affairs, its information about Belizean culture, and its promotion of pride in "being Belizean."

H5: (a) Dependence on interpersonal sources of information within Belize will be positively related to measures of national identity.

(b) Exposure to information from relatives and friends living outside Belize will be negatively related to measures of national identity.

(c) Desire for lifestyle opportunities outside Belize will be negatively related to measures of national identity.

H5 tests the idea that interpersonal relationships with friends and relatives in other countries are strong motivational forces. Close relationships with people living in Belize are expected to provide a "pull" from home.

Close interpersonal contact through letters and phone calls from people living outside Belize may be the strongest predictor of lower national identification with Belize and higher identification with other countries (Snyder, Roser, & Chaffee, 1991). In addition, the "pull" forces of opportunities such as jobs, college, or a more attractive lifestyle in other countries are expected to correlate with lower identifications with Belize.

CHAPTER 4
METHOD

This research design used a cross-sectional survey to gather data from high school students in Belize for correlational analysis. The purpose was to correlate media exposure and dependency variables with mean scores recorded by a 13-item "national identity index." The method section details five main components of the research: the survey design, the sample, instrumentation, the procedures followed, and data analysis.

Survey Design

Cross-sectional surveys are appropriate when research aims include description of a population, explanation of some phenomenon, or exploration of a new topic (Babbie, 1990). Looking at how young people's media dependency patterns in a new nation may be associated with their feelings of national identity meets all three criteria of description, explanation, and exploration. Surveys also are helpful in gathering information about many variables from a large and varied population in a realistic setting. The researcher can collect data within a brief time span, which avoids problems with loss of subjects during a study (Wimmer & Dominick, 1983).

Case studies might develop more detailed information about media use and dependency relationships, but they would require a longer period of time and deliver a smaller sample with questionable application to a general student sample. A survey design was chosen over an experiment because both national identity and media dependency relationships require time to build. Measuring their interaction in an experimental research setting would be more problematical than using survey research to provide a "snapshot" of the population at a given point in time (Bloom, 1990; Shoemaker & McCombs, 1989). The ethnic diversity of Belize means that the small groups used in case studies or experimental designs might be less likely to include all segments of the population.

The ideal situation for this research would be a comparison between a group of young Belizeans with easy access to television, radio, newspapers, and magazines--and a group of media "have nots." Because the independent variables under study involve media exposure and dependency, such a sample would be very appropriate, but Belize is a media-rich nation. Most high school students watch television and listen to the radio almost every day. A large-scale comparison of media "haves" and "have nots" would be all but impossible among young people in modern-day Belize. One survey of media use in Belize indicated that 94% of Belizean high school students had a television at

home (Elliott, 1992). By 1994, there was one television set for every seven people in Belize (Europa World Year Book, 1994).

The survey design must deal with intercorrelations between media exposure and dependency across a number of variables. The survey design also must take into account the common research finding that associations between media exposure and media effects are rarely very powerful and that the magnitude of the relationship depends heavily on the dependent measures (Potter, 1994; Ware & Dupagne, 1995).

In addition to these potential problems, any survey in Belize will encounter country-specific research concerns such as selecting a reasonably representative sample, dealing with cultural barriers, and accounting for linguistic variations (Finney, 1985). As a developing country, Belize presents significant problems in gaining access to accurate data on all citizens. The Central Statistical Office in the capital of Belmopan can provide data on ethnicity, gender and age distributions, and some other information, but selecting a reasonably representative sample of young people is very challenging.

Many homes in Belize have no addresses. A telephone survey would encounter serious problems with sample representativeness because of the nation's estimated telephone ownership rate of one phone for every 10 people (Europa World Year Book, 1994). Another major problem with

a sample of adolescents is that as many as half the young people of high school age are not in school. In summary, survey sampling in Belize encounters the same challenges to accurate data collection that researchers have struggled with in developing countries for many years (Hursh-Cesar & Roy, 1976).

Perhaps because of the barriers to accurate data collection, past researchers working in Belize either made no claims to accurate, representative sampling or avoided mentioning details of how a sample was drawn (e.g., Johnson, Oliveira, & Barnett, 1989). Mass communication surveys of Belizean audiences encountered by this researcher have relied on non-probability sampling. While some research in Belize has claimed random sampling in a very small-scale survey (Oliveria, 1986), most researchers straightforwardly admit to convenience sampling (e.g., Snyder, Roser, & Chaffee, 1991). This research attempted to improve on the convenience sampling procedures reported in past studies by more careful attention to available demographic information, and by working out a method of applying these data to the present survey.

The Survey Sample

The survey population was the high school students of Belize, numbering about 9,500. The sampling unit was made up of six secondary schools in the northern half of Belize that were located in both rural and urban settings. The

unit of analysis was the individual student. The geographic districts of Corozal, Cayo, and Belize were selected for the survey because they contain about 57% of the national population, but include 75% of the secondary school population (Belize: Education Statistical Digest, 1993; Central Statistical Office, 1991).

With three out of four secondary school students located in the northern half of the country, the most efficient survey research strategy was to go where the students were located. The schools surveyed all were within a two-hour drive of Belize City, even though they included a school on the extreme western border and another only a few miles south of the northern border with Mexico. As any map of Central America clearly illustrates, Belize is not a large country in comparison with neighboring Guatemala and Mexico. It is only 174 miles long and 68 miles wide.

The researcher chose a quota sampling strategy to meet a goal of sampling equal numbers of males and females and a representative distribution of students from the major ethnic groups in Belize. Quota sampling meant oversampling populations in certain geographic areas and undersampling populations in other areas to obtain accurate *national* representations of ethnic groups. The distribution of ethnic groups within Belize varies from one part of the country to another, which presented challenges in drawing up the sampling frame.

Geography, Population, and Ethnicity

Under the Belizean system of government, geographic districts have no governmental representation, as states and counties do in the United States. Instead, government representation is concentrated at the municipal and national levels. Districts serve only as geographic identifiers for specific regions. The three districts included in the survey contained 65% of the nation's Mestizos, the largest ethnic group in Belize, and more than 86% of the Creole population, the second largest ethnic group (Central Statistical Office, 1991). Together, the Mestizo and Creole populations account for nearly three-quarters of the population of Belize (Table 3).

Table 3. Belize Ethnic Groups.

Ethnic Group	Population Percentage
Mestizo	43.6
Creole	29.8
Mayan	11.1
Garifuna	6.6
Indian	3.5
German/Dutch Mennonite	3.1
Other	2.3
	100.0

(Source: Central Statistical Office, Belmopan, 1991)

The three districts in the survey showed wide ranges of ethnicity (Table 4). Nearly one in four citizens lived in the generally Creole-speaking Belize City area, while schools in the far northern and western areas included high percentages of Spanish-speaking Mestizos.

Table 4. Ethnic Composition of the Survey Region.

	Ethnic Group				
District:	Creole	Mestizo	Mayan	Garifuna	Other
Corozal	7.6%	74.1%	5.0%	1.3%	12.0%
Belize	67.9	18.7	1.2	5.3	6.9
Cayo	23.0	58.0	8.7	1.7	8.6

(Source: Central Statistical Office, Belmopan, 1991)

The sampling unit described here--the districts of Cayo, Corozal, and Belize--contained 23 of the nation's 30 high schools in 1995. Questionnaires were collected from six of the 30 schools, so the sampling frame included about 20% of the high schools in Belize.

Sample Representativeness

The survey population was drawn to include sex and ethnicity representations that closely matched the secondary school population of Belize. It is understood that a student sample may not accurately represent all Belizean young people of secondary school age. The education system

in Belize has a goal of increasing access to classroom instruction, but in practice many students leave school after completing their primary school education.

Government statistics show that no more than 60% of the students who graduated from primary schools in Belize went on to secondary school in the 1980s (Merrill, 1992). In three of the six geographic districts of Belize, less than one-third of 16-year-olds were enrolled in secondary school (Belize: Education Statistical Digest, 1993). The three districts sampled in this survey contained the three *highest* percentages of 16-17-and 18-year-olds enrolled in school in Belize. While in Belize, the researcher was told repeatedly that the government's unofficial goal is to increase high school enrollment to 60% of the total high school age population.

The very diverse ethnic makeup of Belize and the distribution of its student population creates roadblocks to a representative sample. To develop a student sample that matched the population, gender, and ethnic distributions of the country, the researcher designed a five-step quota sampling strategy for the six schools where data were gathered.

First, the researcher obtained data from the Central Statistical Office in Belmopan indicating population distributions by age, ethnicity, and sex, both nationally and within each of the three districts surveyed. Second,

the researcher reviewed statistics published by the Ministry of Education for information on (1) the gender distributions at each grade level in the secondary schools of Belize and (2) the number of secondary school students within each geographic district (Belize: Education Statistical Digest, 1993). Because the Ministry of Education data did not include information on student ethnicity, the third step involved asking Ministry staff members and school principals for their estimates of ethnicity at each of the schools within each of the districts to be surveyed. If a staff member said that a certain Belize City school had a student body that was 90% Creole and 10% Mestizo, those ethnic breakdowns were recorded in a notebook.

As a fourth step, the (1) national data on sex, age, and ethnicity were compared with (2) the sex, age, and ethnicity distributions by geographic district, and (3) Ministry of Education estimates and school principals' estimates of ethnicity by schools within a geographic district. For example, because the Central Statistical Office listed the national Mestizo population at 43.6%, a survey goal was a completed sample that included 43.6% Mestizos. The researcher followed a quota sampling procedure that targeted a final Mestizo percentage of 43.6%, whether the school sampled was in the Corozal district, with a Mestizo population of 74%, or the Belize district, where the Mestizo population was 19%.

Finally, the researcher calculated the number of survey questionnaires needed for each district and for each school according to the target figures for age, sex, and ethnicity. The target figures were arrived at, as detailed earlier, by comparing available national data and school data on the ethnic makeup within each district and school.

Gender considerations were taken out of the calculations at this stage, because census and school data indicated that the numbers of males and females in the secondary schools approached an even balance, with slightly more females than males. Age was eliminated from the calculations by choosing to select the oldest sample possible, preferably students in their final two years of school. Senior-level status indicated that these students could provide the most meaningful answers to questions such as whether they would be staying in Belize after graduation or leaving the country for better opportunities, items that were included in the survey instrument.

The questionnaire distribution was calculated by aiming for a total in-lab survey sample of 500 completed questionnaires matching the gender distribution and ethnicity of the nation of Belize. This procedure involved balancing the expected ethnic distribution at each of the six schools chosen with the student population known to exist within each geographic district where the schools were located. For example, 43% of the national secondary school

population lived in the Belize district, which is 68% Creole and 19% Mestizo (Central Statistical Office, 1991; Belize: Education Statistical Digest, 1993).

Aiming for a total of 500 completed questionnaires would indicate that 43% (215 students) of the survey respondents should be selected from the Belize district, which was 68% Creole. According to educator estimates, the Creole population in the public schools of Belize City actually was much higher than 68%. Distributing 215 questionnaires at two schools where school officials estimated the Creole population at 90% meant that about 194 of the returned questionnaires probably would be filled out by Creoles. With a national Creole population of only 30%, the survey should target 30% of the 500 questionnaires (150) to Creole students to obtain a representative sample. Thus, it became apparent that Belize City schools should be *undersampled* numerically to balance the national population of Creoles. A total of 165 Belize City questionnaires was calculated for both of the schools surveyed [165 x .90 Creole = 149; Creole target total = 150].

These same calculations were made at each of the six schools in the three districts surveyed. Some districts were oversampled or undersampled to provide the proper ethnic balance, and some schools were oversampled or undersampled. The quota sampling procedure matched (1) national ethnicity distributions, (2) secondary school

student distributions by geographic district, and (3) ethnicity distributions by district and school to arrive at a more representative sample of students than that reported by a number of other studies in Belize. As the results section indicates, this hand-calculated quota sampling method delivered a student sample that closely matched the ethnic and gender makeup of Belize and its secondary schools.

To summarize, a researcher who follows this method should: (1) collect official data to determine the outlines of the target population--in this case, data from the census bureau and the school system; (2) supplement this data with conversations and interviews with "on the ground" experts to avoid the pitfalls of paper data that may not represent actual situations; and (3) experiment with calculation methods that are most likely to yield the desired quota sample, relying on common-sense estimates of school classroom sizes, varying distributions of males and females in technical versus business schools, and a number of other observable phenomenon. In this case, the researcher was aided by past survey experience in Belize that included a knowledge of the Ministry of Education operations and personnel, and personal visits to some of the schools. A careful reading of specialized materials describing survey techniques in developing countries also proved helpful (e.g., Hursh-Cesar & Roy, 1976).

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used in this study was developed from a wide range of literature on cross-cultural studies of media influence in countries where U.S. television is prevalent, and from questions adapted from past research in Belize (Elliott, 1992; Skinner, 1984; Snyder, Roser, & Chaffee, 1991). The main dependent variable is a sense of national identity, as measured by a series of items adapted from Skinner's (1984) study of U.S. television use in Trinidad and Tobago. Skinner (1984) asked respondents to indicate their agreement or disagreement with closed-ended choices such as "The U.S. has the best culture," or "Japan has the best culture." Skinner supplied six or seven country choices for each item and respondents indicated their agreement or disagreement on a Likert-type scale.

In this research, survey recipients were offered 13 similar items in a fill-in-the-blank format. The open-ended format allowed respondents to select any country as their "top choice" rather than agreeing or disagreeing with a list limited to only half-a-dozen countries. For example, Skinner's "culture" item is stated in the questionnaire for this research: "Of all countries, people in _(blank)_ have the best culture" (Appendix C, Q-35). What Skinner (1984) referred to as "nation appreciation" or "nation appeal" measures (p. 99) have been used as a model for a "national identity index" in this research.

The independent variables measuring media exposure are based on questions used by Elliott (1992) and Snyder, Roser, and Chaffee (1991). For example, Snyder et al., (1991) measured content preferences, levels of exposure to various media, and favorite country of media origin (p. 123). Elliott (1992) measured exposure to radio and television as interval data in hours per day of listening or viewing, the same technique used here.

The media dependency items are adapted from Gaziano's (1990) comparisons of individual dependence on radio, magazines, newspapers, and television, and how much certain news content would be missed if audience members had to do without it (p. 4). In this research, respondents were asked which news source they turn to when they want to learn about events in their neighborhood, their town, their country, and the rest of the world. Response choices included media information sources as well as "other people." The questionnaire included five information choices: newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and other people.

The method used in this research also was informed by previous research on Hispanic media uses (Subervi-Velez, 1984), by Drew and Reeves' (1980) study of children and media use, and by McLeod and McDonald's (1985) research calling for particular attention to variables that assess not just media exposure, but dependency, reliance, and exposure to particular levels of content. Drew and Reeves

(1980) stressed the difference between media entertainment and information uses, while Gaziano recommended a series of source choices to indicate media dependence.

Instrument Pretesting

Basing the instrument on previously tested measurement items helped avoid many of the threats to validity and reliability that can occur in a self-designed survey instrument (Miller, 1983). The next step in the research, pretesting the survey instrument in Belize, was intended to avoid problems mentioned in the literature, especially those involving wording of what Skinner (1984) called "sensitive questions" (p. 98) asking for comparisons of cultures.

For example, the instrument used in this research included a series of questions asking young Belizeans to compare life in Belize with neighboring countries such as Guatemala and Mexico and to indicate whether Belizean life was better, worse, or about the same (Appendix C, Q33-37). A review of the survey instrument by a Belizean foreign exchange student living in the United States indicated that none of the questions would be disturbing to the typical Belizean.

To prepare for the on-site instrument pretest, a release form was designed, to be signed by one or both parents (Appendix A). A "student assent script" was prepared and read by the researcher in each classroom at each survey site (Appendix B). The student assent script

repeated the release form information that survey participation was voluntary and that students were free to answer all or none of the questions.

The next step was a complete pretest of the 76-item questionnaire. The pretest was conducted in November 1994, using a sample of 20 high school students attending Ecumenical College in Dangriga, Belize. Ecumenical College was selected because it was not one of the schools that would be sampled during the full-scale survey, a common strategy for assuring that survey participants will not have been previously sensitized to the questions they are asked to answer (Shoemaker & McCombs, 1989).

An American anthropology student who had lived in Dangriga for several months and was very well acquainted with Belize, the aims of the survey, and the survey instrument conducted the pretest, suggested minor changes, and offered advice about available media. For example, she suggested that both "novelas" and "soap operas" should be included in the list of favorite television program choices because young viewers often discussed which genre they liked best (D. Bonner, personal communication, November 11, 1994). This change was made in the revised questionnaire. She also pointed out that few magazines are available in Belize, a topic that is discussed thoroughly throughout this research.

The pretest used all the materials developed for the full survey, including the student permission form signed by

participants' parents and the student assent form read before handing out the questionnaire. The pretest administrator followed the same written instructions for collecting the questionnaires that were later used during the full survey in Belize in January 1995. Questionnaires were printed in English, the official language of Belize and the language of instruction in all public schools.

The pretest proved very helpful because data analysis revealed results that would be confirmed later in the full survey. For example, survey participants in Dangriga seemed to feel very little closeness with their interpersonal sources of information. When asked if they would miss their friends if they did not hear from them for a long time, the typical response was that they would "get along without them" (Appendix C, Q28).

The pretest indicated that the students understood the survey items, successfully answered both the multiple choice and open-ended questions, and completed the questionnaire within 20-30 minutes, an important consideration for school administrators. Minor changes in question wording were made following the pretest, coding, and data analysis. One item was added as a supplement to a question asking survey participants to describe how strongly they identified with their country on a scale from 1 to 10. The added item (Appendix C, Q68) asked respondents to describe on a scale from 1 to 10 how strongly they identified with Belize as

compared to the rest of the world. Perhaps the greatest benefit of the pretest was that it demonstrated that the instrument could be independently tested by a student following written guidelines and yield useful data with no major problems reported.

Analysis of the pretest data also served as a test of coding and statistical procedures that were followed during the main survey. The pretest provided some indication of the relationships between the media exposure and dependency variables and the national identity index that later were supported by data from the full survey. Procedures for coding, entry of data, and data analysis using the SPSS-X statistical package also revealed no problems in producing usable and reasonably reliable information from the questionnaire. With the survey materials and data analysis procedures thoroughly pretested and minor problems addressed, the completed 77-item survey instrument was ready for testing by early January 1995.

Questionnaire

The revised questionnaire had 10 basic parts, from demographic information to television program preferences (Appendix C). Many of the questions asked for standard information included in almost every media use survey, whether conducted in the United States or another country. Others specifically targeted a "Belizean" response. The 10

questionnaire segments were designed to group responses by the topic categories indicated below:

(1) demographic information, Q1-2;

(2) media access, Q3-6;

(3) media exposure, Q7-22;

(4) media dependency, Q23-32;

(5) national identity items, Q33-36;

(6) the national identity index, Q37-49;

(7) foreign influence items, Q50-57;

(8) lifestyle opportunities Q58-65;

(9) identity information, Q66-68; and

(10) television preferences Q69-77.

Demographic items recorded age and sex. Media access questions covered access to radio, broadcast television, and cable television. The media exposure section measured daily use of and preferences for broadcast program types and sources. The exposure section also measured exposure to newspaper, magazine, radio, and television sources from within and from outside Belize.

Media dependency items examined which of five information sources--television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and other people--were used for information about neighborhood, local, national, and international events, or simply for entertainment. Another set of media dependency items measured the amount of dependency on various information sources by asking participants how much they

would miss these sources if they had to get along without them for a while.

The national identity section asked survey participants to compare life in Belize with the overall quality of life in several other countries. A 13-item "national identity index" asked respondents to write in the name of a specific country that does the best job of government, providing jobs, quality schools, and other services. Other items in the national identity index asked which country had the happiest people, and the people most like those of Belize.

Foreign influence items recorded information about contacts outside Belize and the frequency of exposure to those contacts. These items included the number of visits to other countries during the past year and the number of contacts with friends and relatives living outside Belize.

"Lifestyle opportunity" questions asked about the relative balance in the survey participant's aspirations within Belize as compared with opportunities that might be enjoyed outside Belize. For example, the students were asked how interested they were in visiting, working in, living in, or attending a university in another country.

Identity information asked about the respondents' ethnic classification and how strongly they identified themselves as "Belizeans" or members of a "global society."

Finally, nine television preference questions asked about identification with various national sources of

television programs such as Mexico, Belize, and the United States. This section included two open-ended questions asking how participants would like to change the available television programming in Belize and three open-ended questions asking for their three favorite television programs. Open-ended responses were held to a minimum to avoid time-consuming data coding, but it was hoped that the two questions on changing the Belize television schedule would serve as a "mini-focus group" or pilot test of young people's feelings about available television content in Belize.

Measurement of Variables

The main independent variables were operationalized to describe the relationship between the dependent variable, feelings of national identity, and the five dependency measures: television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and other people. Each of the four media dependency measures was divided into two sub-categories: (a) exposure to particular medium or interpersonal source information about neighborhood, town, national, and world events, and (b) dependence on the medium. The interpersonal measure contained three sub-categories: (a) dependency on other people in Belize for information, (b) contact with friends and relatives living outside Belize, and (c) desire to seek "lifestyle opportunities" in another country.

Exposure was generally measured as time spent with broadcast media, frequency of use with print media, and number of contacts per month with interpersonal sources outside Belize. *Exposure* was measured by the actual media use habits reported by survey participants. *Dependence* was a measure of (a) reported reliance on a particular medium for specific information, and (b) feelings of loss if an information source was not available (Tan, 1977).

The measurements of variables used in this research typically were recorded as interval data. They included:

(1a) Exposure to television. Exposure was broken down into viewing of Mexican, American, and Belizean programs, measured by hours per day of reported viewing of each country's programs. One past study (Elliott, 1992) indicated a mean television viewing time for Belizean teenagers of about four hours daily.

(1b) Dependency on television. Dependency was measured by the number of times a survey participant answered "television" to a list of five questions asking about information sources used for entertainment or to learn about events. Survey participants also responded to a sixth dependency measure asking how much they would miss television if programs were not available.

(2a) Exposure to Belizean newspapers. Because Belize has no daily newspapers, exposure was measured by how many times per month respondents said they read a newspaper from

Belize. Respondents also were asked how often they read newspapers from outside Belize. The information was recorded as interval data.

(2b) Newspaper dependency was measured by five items asking about use of newspapers in specific information situations involving entertainment, neighborhood events, local events, news around Belize, and world events. A sixth dependency item asked how much the newspaper would be missed.

(3a) Exposure to Belizean magazines was measured by the number of times per month respondents read a magazine published in Belize. As a corollary to this question, respondents also were asked about their reading of magazines published outside Belize. Magazine readership levels were recorded as interval data.

(3b) Magazine dependency measures included five items asking about magazine use for information about specific situations, and a sixth item asking how much magazines would be missed if they were not available.

(4a) Exposure to Belize radio was recorded as interval data in hours per day of typical listening. As a comparison, respondents were asked how many hours a day they typically listened to radio stations outside Belize. Radio is very popular in Belize; a previous survey of Belizean high school students found a radio listening mean time of about three hours daily (Elliott, 1992).

(4b) Radio dependency was measured by five items asking about media choices for entertainment and information and a sixth item asking how much radio would be missed.

(5a) Dependency on interpersonal sources of information was measured by responses to five questions asking which information source was used for entertainment or to learn about various events. The five information source choices were other people, newspapers, magazines, radio, and television.

A sixth item asked how much friends would be missed as a source of information if they were unavailable. These six items were operationalized as a total reading of dependency on interpersonal sources of information within the country. Those who scored highest on reliance on interpersonal sources of information within Belize also were expected to score highest on measures on national identity.

(5b) Exposure to information from relatives and friends living outside Belize was measured by the number of times per month respondents were contacted by letter or telephone by people living in other countries. Monthly contact by phone or letter with a friend or relative outside Belize was recorded as interval data.

According to a previous study of "push" and "pull" forces from within and from outside Belize, forces that push young people out of Belize are experienced directly, while pulling forces may be communicated by information from

interpersonal sources outside the country (Snyder, Roser, & Chaffee, 1991).

(5c) An additional set of "lifestyle opportunity" items measured the desire to seek important lifestyle services from outside the country. Three questions asking about a desire to attend a university in, get a job in, or live permanently in another country measured lifestyle opportunity choices.

Procedures

The survey questionnaire was distributed by the researcher and an assistant to consenting students at six locations. The six schools surveyed were: Mopan Technical School, Benque Viejo; Sacred Heart College, San Ignacio; Belmopan Comprehensive School, Belmopan; Escuela Secundaria Mexico, a rural school in the Corozal district; and Gwen Lizarraga High School and Anglican Cathedral College, both in Belize City. The self-administered questionnaires were collected over a five-day period from January 16-20, 1995.

After the students returned signed consent forms (Appendix A) and agreed to participate under the conditions of the student assent form (Appendix B), which was read aloud, the questionnaires were filled out under the supervision of teachers, the researcher, or a research assistant. The Ministry of Education in Belize cooperated fully with the survey and assigned a person in the

Ministry's central office to coordinate contacts with school principals.

Questionnaires were collected from upper-level students in the third or fourth form, the equivalent of junior and senior students in an American high school. At one school in San Ignacio, some younger students were included in the sample because of class scheduling conflicts that involved most upper-level students. The time required for completing the questionnaire averaged 20-25 minutes. Students had few questions about how to fill out the questionnaire.

Survey Protocol

Initial permission for the survey was obtained from the Chief Education Officer at the Ministry of Education six months in advance of the survey. The Ministry also cooperated with the pretest which was given three months before the full survey. Ministry of Education personnel made the initial contacts with school principals to secure permission for data collection at individual schools.

Student samples from mixed-sex secondary schools assured fairly equal numbers of males and females divided into groups by grade levels that corresponded with age. Using a student sample concentrated age along a narrow educational range and minimized the impact of commonly used independent variables such as occupation and income.

Another reason for using a student sample is that schools provide the most efficient way to collect data from

a group of young people in a country where problems with determining exact addresses and a low number of telephones interfere with representative sampling. Schools offer groups of young people of the same age, fairly equally divided by sex, and representing all the ethnic groups in the country. Although the high number of school-age young people who are not in school makes a student sample unrepresentative of all the country's young people, a student sample solves many survey problems in Belize.

A final reason for collecting media use data from a student sample is that many previous studies of media influence around the world have used students, which provides a framework for comparison. A student sample offers comparisons across research methods. Past studies have created a basis for measuring the concurrent validity of findings among student populations in Belize and other countries.

School Selection Procedures

Belize has 30 secondary schools, some of which are designated as "government" schools, and some of which are "church" schools funded largely by religious organizations. The total of 30 high schools also includes two private schools, one exclusively for males and one for females. All schools receive some government support. Belize spends nearly 19% of its total government budget on education (Belize: Education Statistical Digest, 1993).

Selecting the survey locations involved an examination of each school's church or government support, the gender and ethnic makeup, the curriculum--academic, technical, or business oriented--and the school principal's willingness to participate in the survey. In most cases, school principals were very willing to assist with the survey and were familiar with survey procedures and student selection methods.

The researcher sought a sample of schools that would provide both government and church schools, rural and urban schools, and schools that differed in emphasis from academic to technical. After discussing these criteria with the Chief Education Officer and agreeing on target schools, a Ministry of Education staff member was assigned to assist with the survey by contacting school principals and offering advice and problem-solving services.

One-third of the schools chosen for the survey were church schools, and two-thirds were government schools. The two church schools were Anglican Cathedral College in Belize City and Sacred Heart College in San Ignacio. Among the four public schools, one was a vocational-technical or "trade" school--Mopan Technical High in Benque Viejo--and one concentrated on technical subjects--Gwen Lizarraga, in Belize City.

The two remaining public schools were what may be classified as "academic" schools. As explained by school

principals, the three main subject concentrations in Belize high schools are academics, technical-vocational subjects, and business. This school sample included two religious schools, two technical-vocational schools, and two academic schools. The schools represented the variety of educational opportunities available to secondary school students in Belize.

During the 1992-93 school year, 14 of the secondary schools in Belize were classified as government or government-assisted schools. Twelve other schools were denominational, two were "specially assisted" and the remaining two were private schools (Belize: Education Statistical Digest, 1993). For many years, all schools were funded and managed by religious institutions. Today, all schools receive some government support, but many continue to be managed by religious denominations, including some of the most elite secondary schools in the country.

While the schools sampled did not deliver a representative sample of all young people in Belize, the survey participants reflected a population of young people continually exposed to political socialization and national identity messages through the school system of Belize. Using a student sample rather than a broader cross-section of the population that includes school dropouts assured a sample that continues to receive political socialization

messages that may be correlated with positive feelings of national identity.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with a thorough study of all frequencies and means, which were used as a basis for conclusions about how well the questionnaire had performed its data-gathering function. These frequencies were compared with national census figures and school enrollment data to establish that age, sex, and ethnicity distributions were representative of the national and school populations.

In addition, frequency distributions offered important information about responses to key indexes such as the national identity index and the "lifestyle opportunity index." Frequency data measured access to and exposure to media sources, the frequency of use of media sources, and preference for media sources and specific media content.

It was important to determine that the age, sex, and ethnicity distributions were representative of the secondary school population in Belize. Without this information, the survey findings would be much less meaningful. It also was important to know that the national identity index showed a heavily Belizean influence, with the United States as the main supplementary source of identity. Media exposure and dependency data gained from the frequency distributions was critical to establish the media use patterns on which the independent variables were based.

Zero-order correlations were used to begin the analysis of associations between the main predictor and criterion variables. The model for this relationship is built around five media use and interpersonal contact variables and their potential interactions with a single dependent variable involving a sense of national identity. The tools used in this analysis are described in the SPSS-X statistical package (Hedderson, 1987; SPSS Inc., 1988). Initial analysis simply looked at distributions of age and sex of the survey participants and their self-classified ethnicity to see if these numbers represented ratios approximating national distributions.

The model used in this analysis incorporated the background variables of age, sex, and ethnicity with the predictor variables of media use and interpersonal relations, and the dependent variable of "sense of national identity." In such a model, the predictor variables are correlated with the dependent or criterion variable. All 13 responses to questions about national identity were combined into a "national identity index." The numerical value for the "national identity index" was the mean number of times a survey participant answered "Belize" to the 13 questions. "Belize" responses were coded as 1; all other responses were coded as 0. Data analysis was directed toward learning how individual media use correlated with an individual's "sense of national identity."

Reliability Measures

A series of reliability measures checked exposure to and use of newspapers, radio, magazines, and television. The reliability analysis was designed to assess the internal consistency of the media use and exposure items. Correlation matrixes were developed for the use of each medium for news about neighborhood events, events in town, around the country, world news, and as a source of entertainment.

A 13-item list of questions asking participants to write in the country with the best government, best culture, best schools and other variables was a central measure of national identity, referred to as the "national identity index." The researcher postulated that participants who were most likely to name Belize as "best" would report the strongest sense of national identity. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the 13-item index as a measure of internal reliability of the items (Shoemaker & McCombs, 1989; Stamm, 1989).

Factor Analysis

As suggested by McLeod and McDonald (1985), media dependence can involve several dimensions such as exposure, time spent with media, reliance on media messages, and level of attention given to media. In the present survey, factor analysis was used to classify media sources according to the underlying dimensions that might account for common

variances in the variables under study (Kim & Mueller, 1978). These dimensions were used to supplement results obtained from other statistical procedures such as correlation analysis. The purpose of factor analysis in this research is simply to look for between-media relationships.

Print and broadcast media, for example, can be expected to factor along different dimensions. Those who report high exposure to newspapers also may report high exposure to magazines and other print media. On the other hand, this relationship may not prevail in Belize. Factor analysis can provide another look at how media exposure and dependency patterns in this research may intercorrelate.

For example, those who report high media use for information about the immediate environment may use a number of media sources to learn about their town and country. Those sources may change when respondents seek information about the rest of the world. Here again, factor analysis can offer a different perspective on media and national identity by grouping information sources by their uses.

Regression Analysis

Relationships among the variables also were explored using multiple regression/correlation. For this research, stepwise multiple regression was used to build a model predicting strength of national identity. As described by Cohen and Cohen (1975), the regression model assumes that

two variables have been differentiated into independent and dependent variables, as is the case here, and independent values are assumed to be "fixed" or selected by the investigator, rather than sampled from some population of variables (p. 49).

In addition, the residuals from the mean value of the dependent variable--the national identity index--are assumed to be normally distributed with equal variances in the population. Because the sample included population distributions that were close representations of the sex and ethnicity of the age group under study, the dependent variable measurements are assumed to be normally distributed. The multiple regression model can be violated with "little risk of error in conclusions about the presence or absence of a linear relationship," offering very robust t-test and F-test validity in the face of violations of distributions and other assumptions (Cohen & Cohen, 1975, p. 49).

In the present research, the complexity of the relationship between media exposure and dependency, and the measures of national identity chosen are well suited for multiple regression analysis. Typical multiple regression analysis usually is restricted to quantitative scales with fairly equal intervals. In this case, multiple linear regression is used to predict the single criterion variable of national identity using several independent variables

(Vogt, 1993). To use multiple regression in this situation, the raw number of "Belize" answers on each questionnaire, coded as 1, was used as a quantitative scale measure.

For example, a total of 13 answers specifying "Belize" as the best country was scored 13. Each survey respondent received a score between 0 and 13. Multiple regression analysis then could be used to measure the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the national identity index. Coefficients for each of the predictor variables are estimates of an individual variable's effects with the effects of other predictor variables held constant (Vogt, 1993, p. 146).

Multiple regression can demonstrate both the combined effects of a set of independent variables as well as the effects of individual variables (Wimmer & Dominick, 1983). It is most useful under circumstances where interval data are distributed normally (Hedderson, 1987). Under circumstances where the data are not distributed normally with equal variances in the population, the robustness of the multiple regression model can withstand some violations (Cohen & Cohen, 1975).

Summary

A cross-sectional survey of secondary school students in Belize was carried out in January, 1995. The research questionnaire covered 77 topics, from age and sex to survey participants' ideas about how they would change television

in Belize to make it more interesting. The key independent variables were media exposure and dependency on media in specific information situations, such as the medium selected for local, national, and international news. Respondents also indicated how much they would miss information sources that were not available.

The dependent variable was a 13-item "national identity index," which measured pride in Belize and identity with Belize. Data analysis focused on matching the independent variables of exposure to mass media messages, use of mass media messages in specific situations, and dependency on mass media messages with the dependent variable of national identity. The national identity index measured positive feelings for Belize over other countries in a number of specific "personal opinion" areas such as best government, best culture, and best schools. The 13 question items were selected with a focus on information areas the survey participants would be very familiar with.

CHAPTER 5
RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the survey, beginning with an analysis of the sample's relative representativeness, an important consideration because it provides a basis for assessing the reliability of the findings. This is followed by a very thorough examination of the survey participants' media exposure, their typical media use, and their patterns of media dependency. Establishing the media exposure, use, and dependency of the young people surveyed is the basis for a discussion of how these media habits may be associated with a sense of national identity.

Finally, the data analysis segment presents correlations between media exposure and dependency and the measures of national identity that constitute the main findings of this research. These correlations, along with a multiple regression model designed to predict national identity, are intended to serve as a guide to other researchers examining relationships between national identity and media use.

The final in-lab sample consisted of 424 questionnaires collected from six secondary schools around Belize. The

sample included about 4.5% of the approximately 9,500 secondary school students in the country. The survey delivered an in-lab sample closely approximating the sex and ethnicity balance of the high school-aged student population of Belize.

General Sample Description

Survey participants ranged in age from 13 to 20, but the mean age was 16.7. Approximately 52% were 17 or older. Two percent were 20-year-olds. It is not uncommon to find students as old as 19 or 20 in Belizean Form III and Form IV classes, which correspond to the junior and senior level of an American high school. Upper-level students were sought because they were most likely to be planning for travel, jobs, or college after graduation, items that were asked about in the questionnaire.

The survey was conducted in three of the six government districts of Belize, which included 75% of the national secondary school population. Among survey participants, approximately 51% were male and 49% were female. Belize secondary school enrollment is 49% male and 51% female, so representation by sex in the sample was very close to the actual distribution nationally. Table 5 shows a comparison of percentages of survey participants drawn from each of the three geographic districts included in the sample frame, along with that district's proportion of the Belize secondary school population.

Table 5. Population Distribution by District.

	Survey sample		Students in district as a % of national total	
	N	%	N	%
Belize district	159	37	4115	43
Cayo district	161	38	1843	19
Corozal district	104	25	1185	13
	N=424	100	N=7143	75

(Source: Belize: Education Statistical Digest, 1993)

Table 5 indicates that Cayo and Corozal districts were oversampled to obtain an ethnic balance representative of Belize. Ethnicity was a major consideration because Belize is a very ethnically diverse country and because ethnicity may play a role in national identity. The two largest ethnic groups in Belize are Mestizos and Creoles, who together make up about 75% of the country's population.

The sampling strategy was to calculate sample sizes in each district according to national census data on ethnicity and school totals of male and female enrollment. National census data were used to measure ethnicity because the school system does not publish data on the ethnicity of the student population. Table 6 compares the ethnic distribution of the survey participants with the latest national census figures. The ethnic distributions obtained show that the quota sampling procedure was successful.

Table 6. Survey Sample Ethnicity.

	Survey sample %	Population %
Mestizo	43.4	43.6
Creole	37.7	29.8
Garifuna	4.0	6.6
Maya	2.1	11.1
Indian	3.1	3.5
Other	9.7	5.4
	100.0	100.0

(Source: Central Statistical Office, 1991)

The sample reflected a very close approximation of the nation's largest and most rapidly growing ethnic group, the Mestizos. Mayans were undersampled, but that may be because many Mayans live in rural areas and are less likely to go on to secondary school. Creoles were oversampled, but it is likely that a greater percentage of Creoles go on to secondary school. Belize City Creoles have formed the nation's elite class for many years. Creole parents consider education very important. Sample results show that the two largest population groups in Belize--Mestizos and Creoles--were well represented in the sample, along with the much smaller Garifuna and Indian populations.

In the Belize district, two schools were sampled. Both schools were in Belize City, the largest city in the country, with a population of about 40,000. The Belize City

schools were: Gwen Lizarraga High School, a technical school in a working class Creole neighborhood, and Anglican Cathedral College, a church school in a heavily Creole urban area near downtown Belize City. In Corozal, only one school was sampled, Escuela Secundaria Mexico, a rural school in a sugar cane growing area between the towns of Orange Walk and Corozal, an area that is 75% Mestizo. Escuela Secundaria Mexico is only a few miles from the Mexican border and most of the students there speak Spanish when they are not in school classes.

Three schools in the Cayo district were sampled because Cayo, often called "the heart of Belize," has an ethnic makeup most like the nation of Belize. The Cayo district lies in the center of the country and contains the nation's capital. The three schools sampled in the Cayo district were: Mopan Technical School in Benque Viejo, located only three miles from the Guatemalan border; Sacred Heart College in San Ignacio, a church school with a varied ethnic makeup that included a handful of American citizens; and Belmopan Comprehensive School in Belmopan, a large government school attended by Creoles, Mestizos, and some members of the Mennonite sect (Table 7). The sample included both government and church schools, privileged and poor, urban and rural, and technical and academic institutions. The three districts in the survey area included 23 of the nation's 30 secondary schools.

Table 7. Sample Distribution and Characteristics.

		Frequency	%
Sex			
	Male	217	51.2
	Female	207	48.8
		424	100.0
Age			
	13	3	.7
	14	16	3.8
	15	74	17.5
	16	97	22.9
	17	124	29.2
	18	65	15.3
	19	32	7.5
	20	9	2.1
	21	1	.2
	Missing	3	.7
		424	100.0
Mean age	16.7		
Median	17		
School location			
Belize City:			
	Gwen Lizarraga High School	71	16.7
	Anglican Cathedral College	88	20.8
Belmopan:			
	Belmopan Comprehensive School	45	10.8
Benque Viejo:			
	Mopan Technical School	51	12.0
Corozal:			
	Escuela Secundaria Mexico	104	24.5
San Ignacio:			
	Sacred Heart College	65	15.3
		424	

Media Access and Exposure

Survey participants had broad access to media, with 99% reporting they had a radio in their home and 97% saying they had a television at home. Belize television is heavily dependent on a satellite and cable network, and 58% of the students said they had cable. The average number of channels reported on home televisions was 23, so a wide variety of programming was available. Only nine survey participants said they had access to no television channels, and 103 viewers, 24% of the sample, said they had access to more than 50 channels. One Belize City cable system carries 54 channels. Table 8 displays a summary of radio and television access and exposure.

Radio

Survey participants reported heavy exposure to both radio and television. Mean listening time for radio stations in Belize was 3.7 hours daily. Belize radio stations are popular, especially the two government-owned stations, heard around the country. Mexican radio also is popular with young Belizeans living along the Mexican border, but largely ignored in other parts of the country. The mean listening time for stations from outside Belize was an hour a day, but more than half the respondents said they did not listen to foreign radio stations. Both geography and language appeared to play a role in daily radio listening habits.

Table 8. Electronic Media Access and Exposure.

	Frequency	Mean	%	Missing
Radio ownership	420		99.1	
Television ownership	413		97.4	
Cable TV access	245		57.8	
Access to TV channels		23		
0	9		2.1	
1-9	172		40.5	
10-19	46		10.8	
20-49	83		19.6	
50-95	103		24.1	
			97.1	2.9%
Hours per day spent with Belize radio		3.7		
0	5		1.2	
1	66		15.6	
2	97		22.9	
3	72		17.0	
4	62		14.6	
4+	111		26.1	
			97.4	2.6%
Hours per day spent with foreign radio		1.0		
0	206		48.6	
1	103		24.3	
1+	88		20.7	
			93.6	6.4%
Hours per day spent with Belize TV		1.4		
0	89		21.0	
1	189		44.6	
1+	134		31.6	
			97.2	2.8%
Hours per day spent with Mexican TV		1.5		
0	184		43.4	
1	65		15.3	
2	57		13.4	
3+	91		21.4	
			93.5	6.5%
Hours per day spent with U.S. TV		4.0		
0	22		5.2	
1	44		10.4	
2	80		18.9	
3	72		17.0	
4	60		14.2	
5	40		9.4	
5+	93		21.9	
			97.0	3.0%

A large number of survey participants lived along the Mexican and Guatemalan borders and spoke Spanish, making the Spanish-language radio format in those countries very attractive. Creoles who do not speak Spanish may have little interest in listening to Spanish-language radio. Forty eight percent of the sample was drawn from Belize City and Belmopan, heavily Creole areas away from the Mexican and Guatemalan borders, and 48% of the sample also reported no daily listening to radio stations outside Belize.

Television

Television was extremely popular among survey participants, who claimed they watched an average of 6.9 hours of television daily. If true, the students of Belize spend more than 25% of each day with television, but their actual viewing time may be overreported because of the method used to obtain the information. The questionnaire included separate items asking respondents to write in how many hours daily they spent watching television programs (1) "made in Belize," (2) "made in Mexico," and (3) "made in the U.S.A."

By asking for these data separately rather than as a total of daily viewing, some overlap in reported viewing may have resulted. Likely explanations for the reported viewing levels include confusion about how to decide which programs were "made" in Belize, Mexico, or the United States, an inability to accurately report how daily viewing time was

spent, and a desire to indicate approval of the small islands of Belizean-produced television that exist in a sea of U.S. programs.

On the other hand, the amount of daily viewing reported may be accurate. With an average of 23 channels available to cable homes, young people may spend many hours "channel surfing" for programs they like. Belize television can take the viewer from a small village to a global village inside the home at the touch of a button. In rural San Ignacio in far western Belize, a one-lane metal bridge spanned the Mopan River on the edge of town, but the 12 television channels available carried everything from Home Box Office movies and the Disney Channel to an all Spanish-language channel that featured bullfights and soccer.

The media variety was richer in Corozal, with 19 cable channels, including several premium movie channels and Spanish-language television from both Mexico and the United States. In Belize City, the content on the 54 channels available varied from rap videos to readings of the Koran from a satellite signal originating in Dubai. This kind of television variety may encourage so much channel changing that young viewers know they are watching a lot of television without knowing just how much and from where.

The "television source" questions did establish that programs made in the United States were by far the most watched shows on Belize television. Viewers said they

watched an average of 4 hours a day of U.S. television, which may be a more accurate estimate of *total* viewing time than the 6.9 hours reported. For example, a similar survey of Belizean students' viewing hours that asked only for total viewing time found a reported average of 3.85 hours per day (Elliott, 1992).

In the present survey, mean daily viewing of Mexican programs was about 1.5 hours, but 43 percent said they never watched Mexican television. As with radio, the percentage of viewers who said they did not use Spanish-language television closely corresponded with the percentage living in the heavily Creole, Belize City--Belmopan area. Primary language, ethnicity, and geographic location all appeared to play a role in the use of media from neighboring countries.

In terms of daily viewing time, self reporting of television programs "made in Belize" appeared most suspect. Viewers reported watching an average of 1.4 hours of television programs "made in Belize" each day, which is possible only if almost every viewer watched virtually every program made in Belize during a given week. A look at Belize television program guides illustrates why the viewers probably overreported their exposure to programs "made in Belize."

It probably is obvious to most viewers which shows are "made in Belize" because some television program guides print the titles of locally produced shows in a different

type face to help viewers identify Belizean productions. A second reason Belizeans probably know which shows are made in Belize is because national and local news accounts for most of the locally produced programming. Television newscasts are read by Belizean news anchors and focus on news from around the country. The nightly half-hour newscast may be repeated later in the evening for a total of one hour of Belizean television five days a week. Newscasts do not air on weekends.

A few locally produced shows also appear weekly, such as the 90-minute *Lauren da Nite* and the hour-long *One on One with Dickie Bradley*, but a viewer would have to be very attentive to the local schedule to see more than an hour of Belizean television a day. An average viewing time of 1.4 hours a day is made even more suspect by the 21% of viewers who reported watching no Belizean programs (Table 8).

Print Media

Other media outside radio and television were less likely to be used daily, although newspapers were popular and magazine readership was substantial. Teachers at several schools where survey data were collected talked about their use of newspapers as a teaching tool and their efforts to encourage students to read local papers. The teachers' efforts appeared to be paying off. Readership of newspapers from Belize averaged 3.7 times a month. Only 11%

of survey participants said they did not read Belize papers during a typical month (Table 9).

The data indicate a core of interested print media users that ranged from about 25%-35% of the sample when measured for readership of local papers, foreign papers, and local and foreign magazines. Asked about local newspaper readership, about 27% of the sample said they read a Belizean newspaper every week. About 12% read an average of more than one newspaper a week. Because all Belizean papers are weeklies, that level of readership is substantial.

Survey participants also were asked about their reading of newspapers from countries outside Belize. Readership of newspapers from other countries was lower than for papers from Belize, although the core of interested print media users remained about the same. More than half said they did not read any other country's newspaper, but 27% said they read a newspaper from another country at least once a month. Overall, survey participants averaged reading a newspaper from some other country 1.8 times a month (Table 9).

Magazine readership was lower than newspaper readership, perhaps because no general interest magazines are published in Belize. Most magazines focus on government and business news. About 30% of the students said they did not read a magazine from Belize during a typical month, but a print media interest group existed for magazines; 34% read a magazine from Belize monthly.

Table 9. Print Media Use.

Number of times read per month:	Belize paper	Foreign paper	Belize magazine	Foreign magazine
0	11.3%	54.0%	29.5%	34.7%
1	14.2	27.4	33.7	25.5
2	17.7	10.4	19.3	17.9
3	16.7	2.6	7.8	8.5
4	27.4	.9	2.4	4.7
4+	12.5	3.3	5.9	8.7
Missing	.2	1.4	1.4	
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean	3.7	1.8	2.4	2.5
Median	4.0	2.0	2.0	2.0

The readership mean for Belize magazines was 2.4 times per month. Belize magazines all are monthlies, bimonthlies, or quarterlies, so readership of at least one magazine a month by more than half the sample is substantial. As Table 9 shows, more than 16% of the respondents said they read a magazine published in Belize at least three times a month.

Magazines from other countries were almost as popular as magazines from Belize. Nearly 26% of the sample read a magazine from somewhere other than Belize at least once a month; another 18% read a foreign magazine twice a month. A high readership segment of the audience (8.7%) reported

reading foreign magazines more than four times a month, perhaps in school libraries. For those who usually read magazines three or more times a month, foreign magazines were the most popular choice, probably because of the limited number of magazines published in Belize and a much larger number of foreign publications. The average monthly readership of foreign magazines was higher than the mean for magazines from Belize.

Media Exposure Choices

Understanding exposure to national and foreign media sources is very important in a study of media dependency and national identity because one assumption tested is that foreign media serve as forces that attract people from developing nations to developed nations. The data summarized in Table 8 and Table 9 display the contrast between the amount of individual exposure to local and foreign media.

Television viewers are exposed to a medium dominated by U.S. programming, although viewers also say they watch significant amounts of Mexican and Belizean-produced programs. Radio clearly speaks with a Belizean voice. The Belizean advantage in radio listenership is at least as strong as the U.S. advantage in television (Table 8).

The survey participants overwhelmingly chose U.S. television programs and Belize radio as broadcast sources of entertainment and information. In both television and

radio, it seems more accurate to speak of audience choice rather than preference, because much of the audience has little choice beyond Belize radio programs and U.S. television programs. The same lack of a broad choice is evident in the print media available in Belize.

Belizean print media enjoy a strong audience advantage in that few newspapers and magazines from outside the country are widely available. Unlike television, where more than half the audience can choose from nearly two dozen foreign channels, foreign newspapers offer weaker competition to the distinctly local content found in Belize papers. Belize newspapers, which subscribe to no international newswire services, generally serve up an almost exclusively local news menu. Readership of newspapers from outside Belize was confined to about one out of four readers. More than half the sample said they did not read another country's newspaper during a typical month.

The audience preference for Belize print media content is less evident when examining the magazine data in Table 9. More than a third of the survey participants did not read a foreign magazine during a typical month, but nearly as many did not read a magazine from Belize. As noted earlier, no general interest magazines are published in Belize. The majority of the small number of magazines available carry government and economic information or features about political figures.

Foreign magazines, though not widely available, offer a much more varied content, slicker production, and formats that may have more appeal to young readers. As a comparison, a winter issue of *Belize Review* featured a report on the importance of marine biological diversity. A summer issue of *Belize Today* had a cover story on "Modernizing the Old Capital." A young reader choosing between those magazines and *Newsweek*, *Playboy*, or *Cosmopolitan* may find the foreign competition in magazines overwhelmingly attractive.

Specific Content Exposure

Survey participants reported their main use of media was for entertainment, watching movies on television and listening to music on the radio. When asked what part of the daily radio schedule was of most interest, 72% said music was the most interesting, although 18% preferred news. When watching television, 43% found movies the most interesting part of the schedule, although viewers also liked sports, comedies, and cartoons. Only 5% said news was the most interesting program on television (Table 10).

Both radio and television were used as sources for news, but radio was a clear favorite, especially for local news. More than 60% of the students listened to news on the radio at least five days a week; 39% listened to radio news every day. For radio listeners, news clearly was an important part of the daily broadcast schedule.

Table 10. Radio and Television Content Interests.

Belize Radio	%	All Television Sources	%
Most interested in:		Most interested in:	
Weather	1.2	Cartoons	9.2
Music	72.2	Novelas	7.3
News	17.9	News	4.7
Religion programs	1.9	Movies	42.7
Talk shows	2.6	Sports	12.5
Radio PSA's	.9	Comedies	12.3
Other	1.2	Soap operas	3.5
Missing values	2.1	Other	5.4
	100.0	Missing values	2.4
			100.0

The students were asked how often they watched television news from the U.S. and Mexico. Only 28% said they watched television news from the U.S. every day and less than half (41%) watched news on U.S. television stations at least five days a week. Television news from Mexico was watched very little. Only 10% watched every day and 51% said they did not watch Mexican television news. Survey participants were not asked how often they watched television news from Belize because of a lack of comparability; Belize-produced television newscasts are available only five days a week.

Because news is an important source of information about Belize and other countries, respondents were asked what specific content they looked for in both radio and television news. In general, radio was used as a source of news about events in Belize, while television was used to find out about events in the rest of the world. When asked whether they were most interested in news about Belize, news about other Central American countries outside Belize, or news about the world outside Central America, radio listeners found news about Belize most interesting. Television viewers looked for news about the world outside Belize (Table 11).

While the survey responses indicate a clear choice of radio over television for news about Belize, that choice is helped along by the country's media structure. Radio in Belize gives local and national news more prominence than news from the rest of the world. National radio stations "know their market" and offer national and local newscasts many times a day.

Local television news in Belize also knows its market, but usually has access to that market only once a day for a 30-minute newscast that may be repeated in a later time slot. The "global" television newscasts such as CNN that are carried by Belize cable services have little reason to report any news from the microstate of Belize. Belize is all but invisible on international television newscasts.

Table 11. Radio and Television News Preferences.

News of most interest.	Radio %	TV %
News about Belize:	81.4	33.0
Other Central American countries:	5.4	21.7
The world outside Central America:	11.3	43.4
Missing values	1.9	1.9
	100.0	100.0

Table 11 reflects a broadcast news segregation by content in Belize. Television generally covers world news; radio generally covers local news. As hypothesized, those who depend on radio for information are expected to show stronger measures of national identity if media dependency is related to identity because radio gives strong coverage to national affairs. Belizeans who spend large amounts of time with radio are exposed to a great deal of news about events in their country. Those who spend significant amounts of time with television, especially if they are watching television news, are exposed to a lot of information about the rest of the world.

Questions about content preferences in print media were not included because radio and television were the media young people spent the most time with. Survey participants reported spending more than 11 hours a day with radio and television combined, while total print media reading

averaged about six times a month for newspapers and five times a month for magazines. The lack of daily newspaper publication and weekly news magazine availability within much of Belize leads to rather low print media exposure.

Media Dependency Measures

The questionnaire included 10 media dependency items. Five nominal measures asked which source of information would be sought for (1) entertainment, or to learn information about the participant's (2) neighborhood, (3) town, (4) country, and (5) world. For example, respondents were asked if they would ask other people, read newspapers, read magazines, listen to radio, or watch television if they wanted to "learn about events around Belize." It can be argued that a person might use several information sources for information about Belize, but respondents were limited to selecting the single source they would depend on most frequently for such information.

Another five items measured how much the survey participant would miss each of the information sources if that source was not available. The five sources were (1) radio, (2) television, (3) newspapers, (4) magazines, and (5) friends. Respondents were given three nominal options for responding to how much they would miss each information source: "lost without it;" "miss it, but get along without it;" and "would not miss it."

The two five-item sets of dependency measures examined interpersonal and media dependency along two dimensions; (1) dependency as measured by use of and reliance on specific sources of information to fill perceived information needs, and (2) dependency as measured by the amount of loss felt when cut off from specific sources of information. Results indicated that three of the five information sources were heavily relied on for information. The three most important sources were (1) other people, (2) radio, and (3) television (Table 12).

Table 12. Dependency on Mass Media and Other Sources.

	Other people	News papers	Magazines	Radio	TV
Source used for:					
Entertainment	9.0%	.9%	2.6%	23.1%	62.3%
Neighborhood news	50.9	12.0	1.2	22.4	9.2
Town events	21.7	25.5	.2	39.6	8.7
Belize events	3.1	18.2	1.7	58.3	13.4
World events	1.2	1.2	3.1	7.3	83.5

Interpersonal sources were the preferred source of information about events in the neighborhood, but not beyond. Belizean young people said they relied on radio for

local and national news and on television for world news and entertainment. Magazines and newspapers were not named as the most preferred information source for either information or entertainment. Like Belize radio and newspapers, locally published magazines include limited coverage of events outside Belize.

Table 12 illustrates some of the differences between the almost exclusively local content in newspapers and on Belize radio stations, and television's wider focus. Radio is the dominant medium for local news. The 13% who would seek out television for news about Belize may be a tribute to the growing presence of Belizean television news. Belize television news does not attempt to duplicate the content available on cable news channels. It maintains a strong local news emphasis.

Most survey participants also said they could get along without their friends as sources of information (Table 13). More than 50% said they would feel "lost" without radio; 43% would feel lost without television; 20% would feel lost without newspapers, but only 13% would feel lost without their friends. Radio was the medium respondents were most likely to feel lost without. Survey participants reported spending much more time with television than radio, but radio's local and national emphasis made it the most important source of information for both local events and national news involving Belize.

Table 13. Reactions to the Loss of Information Sources.

Information Source:	Friends	Paper	Magazines	Radio	TV
Feel lost without	13.4%	20.0%	13.4%	50.9%	42.9%
Miss, but get along without	77.8	42.0	41.7	37.0	38.4
Would not miss	7.5	36.1	44.1	11.1	17.7

Radio seems to fill some very important information needs for young listeners in Belize. It is the medium most likely to be missed. Survey respondents also attached a strong importance to television. Friends and magazines were not likely to be missed if they were not available. Perhaps young people in Belize spend so much time with broadcast media that radio and television have become their friends in some "parasocial" way.

The National Identity Index

The 13-item national identity index was designed to measure personal identification with Belize and serve as the dependent variable. The 13 items asked respondents to write in the name of the country they believed had the best jobs, schools, culture, and other benefits. In answering the 13 questions, participants named a total of 77 countries, but Belize and the United States were named most. The top two choices in each category are displayed in Table 14.

Table 14. National Identity Index Mean Scores.

	Percent of answers naming:			
Category:	Belize	U.S.	Other	
Best government	31.8	37.5		
Best culture	65.3		Mexico	18.9
Best schools	21.7	53.3		
Best jobs	9.2	75.7		
Most honest	49.3		"none"	9.7
Happiest	69.8	7.5		
Richest		51.7	England	10.1
Cleanest environment	42.5		Mexico	19.1
Care most about family	56.8	12.3		
Best country to live in	67.7	11.1		
Most like me	53.1	12.7		
Best TV shows		78.3	Mexico	8.5
Best radio programs	48.3	30.4		

Note: Table 14 shows *only* the top two countries named in each category.

Survey participants were expected to be most familiar with their own country, and to a lesser extent, the United States and Mexico through media exposure and personal visits to those countries. Responses named Belize more often than any other country, so the index seems a sound measurement of

national identity, identification with Belize, and pride in Belize. A reliability analysis showed a Cronbach alpha of .765 for the 13 items.

The national identity index found eight categories in which survey participants identified with Belize more than any other country, even though some of the responses revealed apparent weaknesses in national identity. For example, the "most like me" item was intended to measure the amount of individual identity with others in Belize as opposed to people in other countries. About 25% of respondents said that people in Mexico or the United States were most like them, another indication of a less than universal identity with and pride in Belize.

Respondents were well acquainted with Belize secondary schools, but a majority said schools in the United States were best. This question was intended as a comparison between what the students knew about directly--their own schools--as opposed to schools they did not know about through direct experience, such as those in the United States. The question was phrased as "best schools" rather than best colleges or universities, a topic that was covered in other questions involving "lifestyle opportunities" such as attending a university in another country.

Survey respondents most strongly supported statements that people in Belize were happiest, that Belize was the best country to live in, and that Belize had the best

culture. Respondents also reported strong agreement with statements that Belizeans cared most about their families and that they were "most like" them, even though about one in four said people in Mexico or the United States were most like them.

More than three out of four survey participants agreed that U.S. television programs were best. Despite the popularity of local radio, less than half thought Belize radio was best. U.S. radio also was popular among respondents, perhaps because of a 50,000 watt Voice of America relay station in Belize. The popularity of U.S. radio also may have been based on a liking for American music, which is played often on radio stations in Belize.

Additional Identity and Dependency Measures

Another measure of identity with Belize and pride in Belize as a place to live was developed by asking survey participants to compare life in their country with life in neighboring countries and the United States. It was expected that Belizean students might be fairly well acquainted with neighboring countries, even though they may not have visited them.

Many said they had visited Mexico. It also was expected that they would be familiar with the United States through television, perhaps some visits there, and through talks with relatives or friends who had been to the U.S. The key consideration was not whether they had experienced

other countries directly, but whether they imagined their life in Belize as worse, about the same, or better than life in other countries.

Quality of Life

When asked to compare "life in Belize" with life elsewhere, respondents chose Belize over all four other choices, including the United States. Eighty-four percent thought life in Belize was better than life in neighboring Guatemala, a longtime nemesis because of Guatemalan claims to Belize. A slightly smaller percentage, 78%, thought life in Belize was better than in Honduras, which does not border Belize, but is its closest neighbor to the south.

Many survey participants were familiar with Mexico, and a large number reported visiting Mexico more than once during the past year. Despite their familiarity with Mexico, 58% thought life in Belize was better. Even the United States, which practically all the survey participants were familiar with through television, failed to offer a better quality of life than Belize to a majority of the students. Nearly 53% said life in Belize was better, although about one in five thought life in Belize was worse than life in the United States (Table 15). When comparing life in Belize with life in other countries, respondents gave the United States much more positive comparisons than the neighboring countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico, which many had visited.

Table 15. Quality of Life.

Life in Belize is: Compared with:	Better	Same	Worse	Totals
Guatemala	84.0	8.7	6.4	99.1
Honduras	78.3	15.6	5.0	98.9
Mexico	58.0	32.5	8.0	98.5
U.S.A.	52.6	25.2	19.8	97.6

Contact with Other Countries

Survey participants were well acquainted with several other countries. They reported a great deal of contact with people in other countries, both through personal visits and the exchange of messages with friends and relatives who lived elsewhere. Ninety-two percent of the respondents had friends or relatives living outside Belize. Several said they had lived in other countries, including the United States.

Respondents also reported a large number of personal visits to other countries. The relatively low average family income in Belize did not seem to restrict travel, especially to neighboring countries. More than 47% of respondents said they had visited someone in another country during the past year. Mexico was the most common destination, visited at least once by 18% of the sample, followed by Guatemala (17%) and the United States (11%).

For the 92% who had relatives and friends living outside Belize, letters and telephone calls with information about other countries were common. Thirty percent said they heard from someone in another country at least once a month and another 24% said their contacts averaged twice a month. Nearly 75% heard from friends or relatives in other countries each month.

Lifestyle Opportunities

The majority of survey participants were in the final two years of their high school careers. They were expected to be planning for a future within Belize or possibly making plans to pursue their futures elsewhere by comparing opportunities within and outside of Belize. Several survey items were designed to measure correlations between national identity and the "lifestyle opportunities" represented by careers or jobs in another country after high school.

More than 89% said they "would like to visit another country." The United States was overwhelmingly the country of choice for a visit, although England, France, Mexico, and Jamaica were named frequently (Table 16). Interest was highest in attending a university in another country, most likely because of a limited choice of college opportunities at home. Belize offers post-secondary school training in teaching, nursing, agricultural careers, a two-year "sixth form" course, and a bachelor's degree from the University College of Belize.

Table 16. Desire to Seek Opportunities Outside Belize.

Desire for:	Yes %	No %	% Choosing U.S. "Lifestyle"
A visit to another country	89.2	2.4	44
College in another country	92.9	5.0	63
A job in another country	72.4	25.7	59
Life in another country	26.4	71.7	34

UCB awarded its first bachelor's degrees in 1988 ("Four receive UCB," 1988), but it has a very narrow curriculum focusing on business, education and health, and offers no liberal arts program. Students who seek additional education in science, computer sciences, engineering, law, medicine, or a liberal arts program must look outside Belize for a university degree. Nearly 93% of the students said they would "like to attend a university in another country." The United States was the most popular destination for college, chosen by 63% of those who wanted to attend college outside Belize. Other popular choices included England, Mexico, and Jamaica.

Nearly three out of four survey participants expressed a desire to "get a job in another country." Of those, 59% said they would like to get a job in the United States, and 5% said they would like to work in Mexico. Jobs are a major concern for secondary school students. Unemployment in

Belize has remained high for many years. For young people, underemployment and a shortage of jobs are chronic conditions throughout the country.

The final question in the series of items about lifestyle opportunities asked about the desire to "move to another country to live permanently." Many citizens in developing countries seek job and education opportunities elsewhere, though usually hoping to return to their home country at some point. The majority of Belizean students who were interested in college or jobs in another country obviously had plans to return home as well, because only 26% said they would like to live permanently in another country. The United States was the most likely destination for those who would like to move to another country to live permanently. About six of every 10 young Belizeans who would like to look for a job or attend a university in another country said they would choose the United States.

National and Global Identities

Survey participants showed an ambivalence about Belize in some responses to the national identity index items and to questions asking about a desire for lifestyle opportunities in other countries. Responses to the final six closed-end questions reflected the same ambivalence many survey participants reported in comparing the specific benefits of Belize and other places. The data indicate that media portrayals may play a role in Belizean self-image.

Survey participants were asked to select a point on a 10-point, Likert-type scale to describe how strongly they identified with their country. The weakest identification was scored 1; "I don't feel Belizean," and the strongest identification was scored 10; "I feel very Belizean." Sixty-six percent showed the strongest identification with Belize, responding that they felt "very Belizean." Only 11% placed themselves at 5 or below on the lower end of the Likert-type scale, and only 2% gave the response, "I don't feel very Belizean."

Participants also were asked to use the same 10-point scale to compare their feelings of identity with Belize and with the rest of the world. The strongest national identity was scored 1; "I can only be Belizean," and the strongest global identity was scored 10; "I am part of a global society." On this scale, the ambivalence of young Belizeans toward their country was displayed more clearly (Table 17).

Only 20% said they could only be Belizean, while 28% said they were part of a global society. Being part of a global society does not rule out being proud of Belize, but it does offer respondents a choice of where their "psychic citizenship" lies. Survey participants were about evenly divided between those who were above and below the index midpoint indicated by the dotted line in Table 17. Slightly more than half (52%) leaned toward a global orientation, seeing themselves as part of a global society.

Table 17. National and Global Identity.

	Index Reading	N	%
I can only be Belizean.	1	86	20.3%
	2	16	3.8
	3	18	4.2
	4	14	3.3
Responses 1-5 N=193 (46%)	5	59	13.9
Midpoint----------			
Responses 6-10 N=221 (52%)	6	19	4.5
	7	27	6.4
	8	38	9.0
	9	19	4.5
I am part of a global society.	10	118	27.8
Missing values			2.3
			100.0

The survey respondents below the midpoint on the scale above tended to classify themselves as Belizeans only, a more nationalistic orientation. Those above the midpoint felt they were part of a global society. Table 17 shows a breakdown of the students' Belizean identity--generally Belizean, but holding a "dual citizenship" in their country and in a perceived global society outside Belize.

Along with visits to other countries and close contact with people who live elsewhere, individual choices of mass

media content from source countries may help define identity among Belizean young people. When asked which of five countries' television programs "tell you most about people like yourself," 39% thought Belizean television best fit that description, but more than half gave an answer supporting U.S. or Mexican television. The brief daily schedule of Belizean-produced television may be allowing other countries to help define Belizean identity and tell Belizeans what they are like (Table 18).

Table 18. Television Preferences by Country of Origin.

Which country's TV programs:	Guatemala	Honduras	Mexico	U.S.	Belize
Tell you most about people like you?	.5%	.9%	24.3%	26.7%	39.2%
Show you most about people like you?	.2%	1.4%	24.8%	26.2%	36.3%

A similar question asked which country's television programs "show people who are most like you." This question was designed to examine perceptions of television's image portrayals. Only 36% of television viewers thought Belize television showed them people who were "most" like themselves. More than 50% of respondents said Mexican or U.S. television showed people who were most like them.

Perhaps one solution to the viewers' ambivalence about their self-image would be to put more Belizean television

programming on the air. Respondents generally agreed with the idea of more Belizean television. When asked if they would like to see more television programs "made in Belize," 80% said they would. But another 12.5% said they would like to see "about the same" amount, and nearly 6% said they would prefer to see fewer Belize-produced television programs. These responses indicate that nearly one-fifth of the high-school-age Belizean audience has little or no interest in locally produced television programs about people in their country.

Responses were more evenly divided when the students were asked if they would like to see "more shows about the United States." Rather than comparing responses to Belizean and American television productions, a category where the U.S. is technically superior, the question wording was designed to measure a desire to see more television information *about* the United States. Just over 19% said they would like to see less U.S. television, but nearly twice that number (37.5%) said they would like to see more programs about the United States.

Program Preferences

It was well established that the survey participants preferred U.S. television programs and preferred to use television as an entertainment medium. To find out what specific television entertainment content they were most interested in, respondents were asked to name their three

favorite television shows. More than 200 different responses were coded. Table 19 lists the television shows named most often by survey participants.

Most of the favorite programs, such as *Saved by the Bell*, *Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, and *Beverly Hills 90210* are targeted to a young audience. Only one Belizean television program appeared among the top 10 choices. The locally produced *Lauren da Nite* ranked third in popularity among all programs available on television in Belize. No Mexican television shows appeared in the top 10, although many participants reported heavy viewing of Mexican television.

Table 19. Favorite Television Programs.

Rank		N	%
1.	*Saved by the Bell*	63	15
2.	*Fresh Prince of Bel Air*	43	10
3.	*Lauren da Nite*	18	4
4.	*Martin*	17	4
5.	*Another World*	14	4
5.	*Family Matters*	14	4
5.	*Living Single*	14	4
8.	*Beverly Hills 90210*	13	3
9.	*Unsolved Mysteries*	12	3
10.	*DEF Comedy Jam*	11	3

As Table 19 indicates, most of the survey participants' favorite television programs are produced in America, but *Lauren da Nite*, one of only a handful of Belizean-produced shows, ranks high in popularity. *Lauren da Nite* is a talk show featuring a Belizean woman who discusses Belizean culture with her guests. Of the television programs ranked in the top 10, *Lauren da Nite* has been on the schedule for the shortest period of time, which indicates that it became popular rather quickly (S. Krohn, personal communication, January 18, 1995).

It may be that Belizean-produced programming, which is still in its early years, can compete successfully with much more expensive productions from developed countries if it features issues and personalities viewers can become interested in. The office manager for Channel 7 in Belize City said she senses an audience hunger for more programs about Belize.

"I think they like to see people like themselves. That's what they like. It's not hard to compete [with foreign programs] because they see so much of that" (H. Vasquez, personal communication, January 18, 1995).

Program Ideas

Survey participants also were asked about what television programs they would air if they were in charge of television in Belize, and what type of program they would air if they wrote a television show about young people in

Belize. These open-ended questions were intended to probe for information about what programs were missing from the regular television schedule that would be appreciated by a young Belizean audience. The popularity of the locally produced *Lauren da Nite* indicated that local content was appreciated by a young audience.

In general, responses tended to address perceived social problems in Belizean society such as gangs, drug use, and teenage pregnancy. A second, and much smaller group of responses emphasized more television air time for Belizean culture. Survey participants also wanted to see more movies on practically any topic. As for new programs not already on the television schedule, drug use was the primary focus.

Perceptions that drug use was an important social problem were widespread, despite a lack of any official statistics showing that drug use in Belize is a serious issue. "My show would be about drug dealers...how their life ends in sorrow," one respondent said. "My show would be about the harm that drugs does (sic) to your body," another teenager wrote. "My show would be based on fact, what drugs cause; family problems," said another teenager.

Calls for additional American programming were common, even though some viewers wanted more locally produced programs. "If I was in charge of television in Belize, I will (sic) make it more interesting for young people by putting on more American movies," said a survey participant

from Corozal. But a viewer from Belize City countered with the statement, "I would show more local programs." Another Belize City viewer called for "Facts about Belize and interesting talk shows to watch about life in Belize."

While Belize appears to have few widespread youth problems such as crime, drug use, or teenage pregnancy, the young viewers in the survey audience perceived many social problems and saw television as a means of addressing them. When asked for ideas about television shows featuring young people in Belize, the students proposed a variety of ideas that focused on drug use, crime, and teenage pregnancy. "How young people involve theirselves (sic) in gangs and drugs," was the program theme suggested by teenager in Benque Viejo in far western Belize.

"The show would be about teenage pregnancy and drug abuse," a teenager in Belize City suggested. "Teenagers fighting against violence," was the theme suggested by an 18-year-old in rural San Ignacio, where the most violence apparent on the streets appeared to originate from the loudspeakers of an audiocassette dealer near the center of town.

In summary, the teenage survey respondents in Belize perceived a variety of problems they thought the mass media, and television in particular, should address. These social problems were not apparent in any published statistics, but to the teenage respondents, the problems were very real.

Perceived Belizean social problems included drug use, gang violence, teenage pregnancy, and a lack of positive values among young people.

Television was seen as more than a means of entertainment. It also was perceived as an important tool for informing the public about social problems within Belizean society and possible solutions to those problems. Survey participants appeared to be very idealistic about television's power to correct perceived societal problems. Responses to questions about how they would use television in their country indicate a general support for a "developmental" use of the mass media as a teaching tool for the nation's youth. Survey participants exhibited a faith in television's power to elevate the character of national life, even though they said they preferred to use it for entertainment (See Table 10).

Tests of Hypotheses

The main research question addressed by the five hypotheses was whether exposure to and dependency on Belize media was correlated with feelings of national identity among young people. A corollary to the main research question was whether foreign media content was correlated with feelings of national identity. The five hypotheses, divided into sub-categories of media exposure and dependence, examined correlations related to the main

research question. Hypotheses testing gave the results indicated below.

H1: (a) There will be a negative correlation between exposure to television and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

Correlation analysis showed a very weak positive relationship--which was not significant--between levels of television exposure and measures of national identity (r = .037, p = .242). This hypothesis was based on an assumption that higher amounts of total daily television viewing would correlate with lower measures of national identity on the "national identity index." A reliability analysis for the 13 items that made up the dependent variable, the "national identity index," indicated a high degree of internal consistency (alpha = .765).

Because the television schedule is dominated by U.S. rather than Belizean programs, those who typically viewed heavy amounts of television were expected to spend a lot of time thinking about a country outside of Belize, which might correlate with lower national identity measures. Heavy television viewing also might take time away from other Belize media, such as the popular Radio Belize. Daily exposure was measured by interval data, using the number of hours of daily television watching reported by the survey participants.

H1: (b) There will be a negative correlation between dependency on television and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

Correlation analysis indicated a very weak negative relationship--which was not significant--between dependency on television and feelings of national identity (r = -.021, p = .334). The very weak negative correlation indicates that television dependency has a weak negative association with national identity. The association between the two variables, however, was not significant.

It may be that higher dependency on television, with its overwhelmingly foreign content, means spending less time with Belize media, school textbooks, friends, or a number of other activities that might reinforce feelings of identification with Belize. Television also may function as a negative influence by serving up glamorous portrayals of other countries and lifestyles so that Belize suffers by comparison. Not too much should be made of this relationship, however, because of the weak correlation between television dependency and national identity.

Television dependency was measured by the number of times respondents answered "television" to a set of five questions. The five questions asked which media source they used for entertainment, or to learn about events (1) in their neighborhood, (2) in their town, (3) around Belize, and (4) in the world. The five responses from survey

participants were coded into a single variable, "dependency on television," which showed a strong and significant negative correlation with a sixth item asking how much respondents would miss television if they could not watch for a long time (r = -.213, $p < .001$).

The negative correlation between the two measures indicated that those who were highly dependent on television as an information source also would be very likely to miss television. In this case, a high number of "television" responses correlated negatively--as expected--with the lowest number indicating how much television would be missed, which was choice (1) "lost without it."

H2: (a) There will be a positive correlation between exposure to Belize newspapers and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

Correlation analysis showed a positive, but weak relationship between exposure to Belize newspapers and feelings of national identity; the relationship was not significant (r = .055, p = .151). This hypothesis was based on an assumption that increased readership of newspapers from Belize would be associated with stronger feelings of national identity as measured by the national identity index. Exposure was recorded as interval data, measured by how many times survey participants reported reading a Belize newspaper within the last month.

H2: (b) There will be a positive correlation between dependency on Belize newspapers and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

Correlation analysis showed a very weak positive but non-significant relationship between dependency on newspapers and feelings of national identity (r = .029, p = .275). This hypothesis also was based on an assumption that stronger individual dependencies on newspapers would be associated with stronger feelings of identity with Belize as measured by the national identity index. Most newspapers available in Belize are published within the country. Foreign newspapers are somewhat difficult to obtain, and 54% of survey participants said they typically did not read newspapers published outside Belize.

Newspaper dependency was measured by the number of times respondents answered "newspapers" to a set of five questions asking which media source they used for entertainment, or to learn about events (1) in their neighborhood, (2) in their town, (3) around Belize, and (4) in the world.

The five responses from survey participants were coded into a single variable, "dependency on newspapers," which was negatively correlated with a sixth dependency item asking how much respondents would miss newspapers if they were not able to read a paper for a long time (r = -.211, p < .001). The negative correlation indicated--as

expected--that those who were dependent on newspapers for information and entertainment also were likely to miss newspapers if they were not available. The highest number of newspaper information uses correlated negatively with the lowest "would miss media" choice, which was (1) "lost without" newspapers.

H3: (a) There will be a positive correlation between exposure to Belizean magazines and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

Correlation analysis showed a fairly strong and significant positive correlation between respondents' exposure to Belize magazines and their feelings of national identity (r = .143, p = .003).

This hypothesis was based on an assumption that increasing levels of monthly exposure to magazines from Belize would be associated with stronger feelings of national identity as measured by the national identity index. Magazine exposure was recorded as interval data, measured by how many times survey participants reported reading a Belize magazine within the last month.

Mean readership of magazines was 2.4 times a month, although a large number of survey participants said they did not read a magazine published in Belize during a typical month (N = 125, 29.5%). However, those who did read a Belize magazine two or more times monthly also were more likely to report higher measures of national identity. This

hypothesis, predicting a positive relationship between national identity and reading of Belize magazines, was supported.

H3: (b) There will be a positive correlation between dependency on Belizean magazines and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

Correlation analysis showed a weak positive relationship that was not significant between magazine dependency and feelings of national identity (r = .037, p = .225). Dependency on magazines as an information source was quite low. Magazines ranked last among the five information sources tested for dependency (See Table 12).

This hypothesis was based on an assumption that stronger dependencies on magazines for information and entertainment would be associated with stronger feelings of identity with Belize on the national identity index. Magazine dependency was measured by the number of times respondents answered "magazines" to a five-item set of questions asking which media source they used for entertainment, or to learn about events (1) in their neighborhood, (2) in their town, (3) around Belize, and (4) in the world.

The five responses from survey participants were coded into a single magazine dependency variable. A reliability analysis of how well magazine dependency correlated with a sixth item asking how much respondents would miss magazines

if they were not able to read them for a long time was negative--as expected--but not statistically significant (r = -.049, p = .152).

H4: (a) There will be a positive correlation between exposure to radio programs originating in Belize and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

Correlation analysis showed a weak positive correlation, approaching significance, between levels of the survey participants' radio exposure and their feelings of national identity (r = .072, p = .087). The significance level gives reason to believe that the weak positive association between Belize radio exposure and national identity is valid. National identity and listening to Belize radio stations did show the positive relationship predicted by the hypothesis, but the relationship was quite weak.

This hypothesis was based on an assumption that higher levels of daily listening to Belize radio stations would be associated with stronger feelings of national identity. Daily Belize radio exposure was recorded as interval data, measured by self-reported hours of Belize radio listening. Among the survey participants, reported daily listening time to Belize radio stations averaged 3.7 hours (See Table 8).

H4: (b) There will be a positive correlation between dependency on radio programs originating in Belize and measures of national identity among young Belizeans.

Correlation analysis revealed a positive, but weak relationship between dependency on radio and feelings of national identity (r = .054, p = .134). This hypothesis was based on an assumption that dependency on radio, with its constant daily coverage of local and national events, would be associated with a general awareness of events and culture in Belize, and with national identity measures.

Radio dependence was measured by the number of times respondents answered "radio" to a set of five questions asking about which media source they used for entertainment, or to learn about events (1) in their neighborhood, (2) in their town, (3) around Belize, and (4) in the world. The five responses were coded into a single "radio dependency" variable, which showed a negative and significant correlation with a sixth item asking how much respondents would miss radio if they could not listen to it for a long time (r = -.165, p < .001). Those who were most dependent on radio also were most likely to feel "lost without it."

Other survey responses indicated that radio was the single source of information survey participants were most likely to report they would feel "lost without" (See Table 13). Nearly 51% of those surveyed said they would feel lost without radio, while only 13% said they would feel lost without their friends if they did not hear from them for a long time. Despite the importance of radio, and a positive correlation between both (1) radio exposure and national

identity, and (2) radio dependency and national identity, these relationships were not significant. Belize radio stations were popular with survey respondents, likely to be missed if not available, but they did not show a significant relationship with the measures of national identity that were used in this research.

H5: (a) Dependence on interpersonal sources of information within Belize will be positively related to measures of national identity.

This hypothesis was not supported. Correlation analysis revealed a weak negative association between dependency on other Belizeans as an information source and measures of national identity (r = -.046, p = .193). The hypothesis was based on an assumption that conversations with other Belizeans about entertainment, neighborhood events, local events, news about Belize, and information about the world would be associated with stronger feelings of national identity.

Perhaps because of the generally low trust in the honesty of others (See Table 14) and the low attachment to friends as information sources (See Table 13), Belizean young people place a low value on information from their friends and peers. If so, dependence on other Belizeans as information sources can be expected to be quite low, although respondents said they would be likely to ask other people for information about events in their neighborhood.

It may be that young people who feel the most "Belizean" also feel that *other* Belizeans are less honest, reliable, and knowledgeable, and therefore less likely to be used as information sources.

Dependence on others for information was measured by responses to five questions asking about which information source was used to learn about various events. The five responses were coded into a single variable, "dependency on other people." A reliability analysis indicated that the "dependency on other people variable" was weakly correlated with a sixth survey item asking how much respondents would miss their friends if they did not hear from them for a long time (r = .066, p = .090).

In general, respondents were likely to depend on information from others for events in their neighborhood, but not beyond the limits of the neighborhood. They also were unlikely to miss their friends as an information source if they did not hear from them for a long time. Only 13% said they would "feel lost" if they did not hear from their friends for a long time, as compared with 51% who would feel lost without radio and 43% who would feel lost without television (See Table 13).

H5: (b) Exposure to information from relatives and friends living outside Belize will be negatively related to measures of national identity.

This hypothesis was not supported. Correlation analysis indicated a positive and significant association between exchange of information with relatives and friends outside Belize and national identity measures, rather than the negative association expected (r = .089, p = .047).

This hypothesis was based on an assumption that contact with persons living outside Belize would be associated with weaker measures of national identity and perhaps a desire to seek opportunities outside the country, as friends or relatives may have done. Exposure to outside information was recorded as interval data, measured by the survey participants' self-reported number of monthly contacts with others by letter or telephone. Some 92% of respondents were acquainted with someone living outside the country, and the mean number of outside contacts per month was 2.2.

Previous research has identified interpersonal contact with people living outside Belize as the most important factor in a desire to emigrate (Snyder et al., 1991). However, news from another country can be both positive or negative. It may be that Belizeans who are in regular contact with friends and relatives living in Mexico or the United States are warned that the life of an immigrant can be difficult. This type of information exchange can make Belize look good by comparison.

Snyder et al., (1991) suggested that use of foreign media in Belize may create an increased awareness of some of

the problems in other countries. In such cases, Belizean young people are likely to ask their contacts in those countries about perceived problems, which can lead to at least some negative information. The same kind of information situation may have influenced the participants in this survey.

H5: (c) Desire for lifestyle opportunities outside Belize will be negatively related to measures of national identity.

Correlation analysis revealed a weak negative association approaching significance between three "lifestyle opportunity" variables and measures of national identity (r = -.080, p = .069). This hypothesis tested the idea that high school students who planned to seek (1) a college education in another country, (2) a job in another country, or (3) permanent residence in another country would register lower identifications with Belize.

A reliability analysis of the three items showed very low internal consistency (alpha = .012), so each item was analyzed separately, using a series of two-tailed t-tests for independent samples. The t-tests were used to examine differences in feelings of national identity by comparing the mean "lifestyle opportunity" scores of three groups: (1) those who wanted to seek a college education in another country and those who did not; (2) those who wanted to seek employment in another country and those who did not; and (3)

those who wanted to live permanently in another country and those who preferred Belize (Table 20). The results showed that the mean national identity scores of those who planned to look for lifestyle opportunities outside Belize did not differ significantly from those who planned to stay in Belize.

Table 20. T-Tests of Lifestyle Opportunity Choices.

VARIABLE = National Identity

GROUPS:		Mean	S.D.	t-value	df	2-tail Sig.
College abroad:						
Yes	394	5.24	2.83	.83	413	.409
No	21	5.76	3.05			
Job abroad:						
Yes	307	5.15	2.81	1.39	414	.166
No	109	5.59	2.88			
Live abroad:						
Yes	112	5.04	2.89	.97	414	.333
No	304	5.34	2.80			

Many of the survey participants expressed a desire to seek opportunities outside Belize. Nearly 93% said they would like to attend college in another country; 72% said they would like to work in another country, and 26% said they would like to live permanently in another country (See

Table 16). Despite those responses, the desire to seek lifestyle opportunities elsewhere did not result in significant differences in measures of the respondents' national identity.

Summary of Correlations

To summarize, none of the media dependency relationships hypothesized proved to be significantly correlated with national identity measures. Only media exposure hypotheses were supported by the survey results. Reading Belize magazines was significantly correlated with measures of national identity. Those who read more Belize magazines each month also were more likely to report higher national identity index scores.

A positive association, approaching significance, was found between Belize radio exposure and national identity. Those who spent more time listening to radio stations from Belize also were more likely to report higher scores on the national identity index. It seems likely that those who held the strongest national identities also would enjoy Radio Belize, which regularly reminds listeners that it is "the voice of Belize." It also seems likely that those who spent the most time listening to Radio Belize or Friends FM would be well acquainted with national news, the cultural events around the country, and the radio theme of "being Belizean," all of which might increase an existing sense of national identity.

Finally, Hypothesis 5:(b), predicting a negative correlation between national identity and information exchange with relatives and friends living outside Belize was not supported. The predicted negative correlation was significant and positive. Survey participants showed a fairly strong relationship between letters and telephone calls from people in other countries and their measures of national identity (r = .19, p = .047). One conclusion might be that news from friends and relatives in other countries made Belize seem better in comparison to other places. If so, feelings that Belize is better were reflected in the responses to the national identity index items.

Belizean young people who hear from close friends and acquaintances about problems in other countries may be more likely to believe that Belize has the "best culture," or the "happiest" people. Interpersonal information sources in other countries may support some concerns raised by the foreign media most of Belizean young people are exposed to on a daily basis.

Additional Analyses

Other statistical tests developed a clearer picture of associations between media use and national identity. Multiple linear regression was used to examine the value of media exposure and media dependency variables in predicting national identity. The background variables of age, sex, and ethnicity also were included in the regression equation.

"Lifestyle opportunity" variables were added to the independent variables list, along with a several items asking about visits to other countries and comparisons between life in Belize and life in neighboring countries and the United States. In all, 36 independent variables were placed in the regression equation, with the national identity index listed as the dependent variable.

The Regression Model

Stepwise multiple regression identified five variables which together accounted for about 13% of the variation in national identity scores. The five variables are listed in Table 21. While a model that predicts only 13% of variance in the dependent variable may seem somewhat weak in predictive value, the result is not unexpected. A review of similar studies by Potter (1994) found that the magnitude of coefficients predicting such relationships usually is low, with media exposure variables typically predicting 3% or less of the variance.

Two media exposure variables were listed in the regression equation displayed in Table 21. The variables were exposure to Belize magazines and exposure to foreign newspapers. Reading Belize magazines correlated positively with higher scores on the national identity index. Those who read more Belize magazines each month also were more likely to record more "Belize" answers on the national identity index.

Table 21. Regression Model Predicting Belize Identity.

Variable	Beta	T	Sig T	R^2
1. Comparison with U.S. life	.217	3.92	.0001	.0608
2. Sex of respondent	.143	2.57	.0106	.0273
3. Belize magazine exposure	.195	3.24	.0014	.0155
4. Foreign newspaper exposure	-.160	-2.68	.0077	.0208
5. Comparison with Honduras	.115	2.09	.0379	.0131

Multiple R .3708

Total R^2 .1374

Adjusted R^2 .1224

F = 9.1485

Signif F < .0001

Analysis of Variance

	DF	SS	MS
Regression	5	337.792	67.558
Residual	287	2119.396	7.385

Variables not in the Equation

Age
Belize newspaper access
Belize radio exposure
Mexican TV exposure
Dependency on others
Magazine dependency
Television dependency
Would miss magazines
Would miss television
Desire foreign visit
Desire foreign job
Global identity
Foreign country visits
Mexico visits
Honduras visits
Belize/Guatemala comparison
Cable TV access
Foreign magazine use
Belize TV exposure
U.S. TV exposure
Newspaper dependency
Radio dependency
Would miss newspaper
Would miss radio
Respondent ethnicity
Desire foreign college
Desire to emigrate
Contacts outside Belize
Guatemala visits
U.S. visits
Belize/Mexico comparison

Reading foreign newspapers correlated negatively with national identity scores, indicating that more frequent reading of foreign newspapers would predict lower measures of identity with Belize. The predictive value of foreign newspaper readership is questionable, however, because 54% of respondents said they did not read a newspaper from another country during a typical month. Together, the two print media exposure variables--Belize magazines and foreign newspapers--accounted for about 3.5% of the variation in national identity scores. Foreign newspaper readership accounted for 2% of the variance (R^2 = .0208), and Belize magazine readership accounted for about 1.6% (R^2 = .0155).

According to the linear regression model, the best predictor of national identity among these survey participants is the individual's comparison between life in the United States and in Belize (beta = .217). A one standard deviation difference in the "U.S. life" predictor variable would be expected to result in a difference of .217 in the "national identity" criterion variable (Hedderson, 1987, p. 105).

The "U.S. life" survey item asked participants to compare their lives with life in the United States and describe the result as (1) worse, (2) about the same, or (3) better. A feeling that life in Belize was better received the highest score, which correlated positively with higher "Belize" scores on the national identity index. For young

people in Belize, the main hurdle to a positive feeling about their own country is the possibility that life in the United States, where many Belizeans live, may be better.

Except for positive feelings about life in the United States, gender was the best predictor of strength of identity with Belize. Females in the sample were more likely than males to record higher national identity scores on some items. Calculating a series of cross-tabulations with gender as the independent variable and with each of the 13 items used in the nstional identity index as a separate dependent variable, significant differences were found by gender in responses to three items. Females were more likely than males to say that Belize had the "best culture" (X^2 = 7.03, df = 2, $p < .05$); the "best schools" (X^2 = 8.18, df = 2, $p < .05$); and the "best radio programs" (X^2 = 9.11, df = 2, $p = .01$).

Media Use Ratios as Identity Predictors

Two previous examinations of relationships between media and young Belizeans' desire to seek opportunities outside their country were based on data gathered almost 10 years before this research (Roser et al., 1986; Snyder et al., 1991). The past research in Belize reported that young people most likely to look for opportunities outside their country were those who: (1) had numerous interpersonal sources of information in other countries, (2) watched

television for entertainment, and (3) read newspapers from the United States (Snyder et al., 1991, p. 126).

The present research also indicated (1) a significant relationship between outside contacts and national identity (r = .089, p = .047), a regression model prediction of the role of foreign newspaper reading and national identity measures (beta = -.160, R^2 = .02), and a reported 88% of respondents whose favorite television content was entertainment programming such as movies, cartoons, soap operas and novelas (See Table 10).

These similar findings from three research projects over a 10-year period support the conclusion that a group of foreign-oriented young Belizeans exists within the general population. This group exhibits certain characteristics that have been identified, such as their program preferences and patterns of media use and dependency. One indication of the possible size of this group of foreign-oriented young people is found in the 28% who identified themselves as members of a "global society" in Table 17, choosing the strongest "global" measure on the 10-point, Likert-type scale of Belizean/global identity.

To examine specific relationships between media exposure/dependency and national identity in more detail, a second multiple regression analysis procedure was used to recode media exposure data, separating out two distinct groups of media users; (1) those who reported high exposure

to Belize media and high dependency on people within Belize for information and entertainment, and (2) those who reported heavy exposure to foreign media and outside contacts for information and entertainment. This was done by using an SPSS-X procedure that converts this interval data into ratios.

Television exposure, for example, was converted into a ratio of the time spent with spent with Belizean versus foreign television. Other ratios were computed for exposure to Belize radio and foreign radio, Belize and foreign newspapers, and Belize and foreign magazines. Measures of (1) information dependency on other people within Belize and (2) monthly contacts with friends and relatives outside Belize were converted to standardized z-scores. The two resulting z-scores were compared as ratios of interpersonal information dependence on sources from within and outside of Belize. Placing all the computed ratios of "national" versus "global" information sources in a regression equation was expected to heighten the influence of media in predicting national identity because it polarized the extremes of information dependency.

The new regression equation included the independent variables of age, sex, and cable television access, along with the media use and dependency ratios, comparisons of life in Belize with life in other countries, and desire to seek "lifestyle opportunities" in other countries. The

national identity index was the dependent, or criterion variable. This regression equation contained sets of national versus global choices, from media use and dependency to desire to remain at home or to seek important lifestyle opportunities elsewhere.

In studying media influences on perceptions of reality, the most accurate predictions can be expected when comparing light media users with those in the media "mainstream" (Gerbner et al., 1980a). The media "mainstream" includes those exposed to a large number of media messages over a long period of time. Thus, extremely heavy media users can be expected to report a view of the world that differs from the worldview of infrequent media users.

Individual worldview differences between heavy and light exposure to media are expected to be greatest when: (1) a researcher is studying relatively homogenous groups, (2) measuring total amount of media exposure, and (3) looking at the consequences of exposure over a long period of time (G. Gerbner, personal communication, May 27, 1995). These three elements tend to maximize the measurable impact of media exposure. Media researcher George Gerbner's criteria fit the situation illustrated in Table 22, in which a relatively homogenous student population was examined, using a wide range of media exposure criteria, with a goal of measuring the long-range consequences of such exposure on feelings of national identity.

Table 22. A Media Dependency Model Predicting Identity.

Variable	Beta	T	Sig T	R^2
1. Comparison with U.S. life	.272	3.45	.0008	.0801
2. Would miss radio	.246	3.08	.0025	.0449
3. Television dependency	-.211	-2.64	.0142	.0433

Multiple R .4104
Multiple R^2 .1682
Adjusted R^2 .1496
F = 9.0329
Signif F < .0001

Analysis of Variance

	DF	SS	MS
Regression	3	205.97	68.658
Residual	234	1018.52	7.601

Variables not in the Equation

Age	Sex
Cable TV access	Newspaper dependency
Magazine dependency	Radio dependency
Belize/foreign TV ratio	Belize/foreign radio ratio
Belize/foreign newspaper ratio	Interpersonal ratio
Belize/foreign magazine ratio	Would miss friends
Would miss newspapers	Would miss radio
Would miss television	Would miss magazines
Respondent ethnicity	Desire foreign visit
Desire foreign college	Desire foreign job
Desire to emigrate	Global identity
Contacts outside Belize	Foreign country visits
Guatemala visits	Mexico visits
U.S. visits	Honduras visits
Belize/Mexico comparison	Belize/Honduras comparison
Belize/Guatemala comparison	

To develop Table 22, data on heavy and light exposure groups were converted to ratios of heavy and light exposure to Belizean versus foreign media, and Belize versus foreign

interpersonal information sources. Results indicate that the "U.S. life" variable, comparing the perceived quality of life in the United States and Belize, remained the best predictor of Belize national identity, but Belize media dependencies assumed predictive roles. As Table 22 illustrates, media dependency patterns can predict national identity measures if total exposure to "local" versus "global" information sources are measured as ratios.

The positive beta coefficient for "amount that radio would be missed" predicts that the young people most likely to miss radio will report stronger measures of identity with Belize. In another independent measure of media attitudes in this survey, respondents also reported radio was the communication medium most likely to be missed (See Table 13). The negative beta coefficient for television dependency predicts that students with stronger television dependencies will report lower measures of national identity. Television dependency was measured by the number of times participants said they would choose television for (1) entertainment, (2) neighborhood news, (3) events around town, (4) events in Belize, and (5) world events. Most respondents said they used television for entertainment and news about world events, and spent most of their time watching American programs.

Table 22 gives a clearer picture of media dependency relationships and national identity. Converting media

exposure data to ratios of Belize and foreign media before entering the data in the regression equation produced a different look at the role of media in national identity than the regression model shown in Table 21, where Belize magazines and foreign newspapers were among the predictors of identity. Ratios can provide important information in a fixed linear regression model because standard deviations will change by the same factor as the original scores when linear transformations such as ratios are computed as z-scores (Cohen & Cohen, 1975, p. 32).

Principal Factor Analysis

A principal factor analysis with a varimax rotation was used to partition the media exposure variables into reliable factors to examine relationships among sources of media messages (Table 23). This procedure was based on four earlier data analysis findings. (1) Correlation analysis recorded a statistically significant relationship between Belize magazine exposure and measures of national identity, and a relationship approaching significance between Belize radio exposure and national identity. (2) Regression analysis included Belize magazine exposure as a predictor of national identity measures, but not Belize radio exposure. (3) The regression analysis also included foreign newspapers as a variable for predicting the strength of national identity scores. (4) A second regression equation based on media exposure data computed as ratios of Belize/foreign

media use included two media predictors of national identity: (a) the amount radio would be missed and (b) dependency on television.

Perhaps relationships among media increase or decrease the influence of each medium that is used as a separate source of information or entertainment. These intercorrelations may help explain how media use patterns operate within the audience. Factor analysis was used to examine relationships that may explain how certain factor composites maximize the total variance of the data (Dobos & Dimmick, 1988).

Table 23. Media Source Factor Loadings.

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Foreign magazines	.66269		
Foreign newspapers	.66248		
Belize magazines	.51191		
[Factor 1 = "print media"]			
Belize radio hours		.56195	
Belize TV hours		.51387	
[Factor 2 = "local broadcast media"]			
Foreign radio hours			.61305
Mexican TV hours			.60523
[Factor 3 = "Mexican broadcast media"]			

The factor analysis included nine variables; Belize and foreign newspaper exposure, Belize and foreign magazine exposure, exposure to Belize and foreign radio stations, and Belize, U.S. and Mexican television exposure. The rotated factor matrix identified the three principal factors. Foreign magazines, foreign newspapers, and Belize magazines all had loadings of .50 or greater on Factor 1. These were called "print media." Hours of Belize radio listening and hours of Belize television viewing loaded on Factor 2, referred to here as "local broadcast media." Media variables that loaded at .40 or below were removed from the factor rotation and are not shown in Table 23 (McCrosky & Young, 1979). These variables included hours of U.S. television exposure and Belize newspaper exposure.

Hours of daily listening to foreign (Mexican) radio stations and hours of daily Mexican television viewing loaded on Factor 3, referred to here as "Mexican broadcast media." Taken together, the three factors explained 33.6% of media source variance, with Factor 1 (print media) explaining 17% of the variance (eigenvalue = 1.6). Exposure to U.S. television did not load significantly on any of the three principal factors.

Both exposure to Belize magazines and foreign newspapers (Factor 1) predicted national identity measures in the regression equation (See Table 21). Belize radio exposure (Factor 2) correlated weakly with national identity

in the correlation analysis, indicating some association between Belize radio listening and national identity. Factor 3, which included Mexican radio and television exposure, was much less important. In the factor analysis, print media explained the most variance. The factor analysis was helpful in understanding how Belize magazine exposure and foreign newspaper exposure were predictors of national identity in the first regression model, while radio and television variables (Factor 2) were predictors of national identity in the second, ratio-based regression model (Table 22).

Summary

The results of this research indicate some correlations between the media use of secondary school students in Belize and measures of their national identity. Hypotheses testing identified only one significant correlation between the independent media exposure variables and the dependent variable measuring national identity. The significant correlation involved readership of Belize magazines.

H3:(a) predicting a positive correlation between exposure to Belize magazines and measures of national identity was supported (r = .143, $p < .01$). Correlation analysis also indicated a weak relationship approaching significance between radio exposure and national identity measures (r = .072, p = .087). Correlation analysis showed significant support for only one of the 11 sub-hypotheses

describing the relationships between media exposure and national identity--magazine exposure.

H5:(b), predicting a negative correlation between national identity and information exchange with relatives and friends living outside Belize was not supported. Instead, correlation analysis showed a relationship that was significant and positive. Students who received regular letters and telephone calls from people in other countries recorded higher, not lower, measures of identity with Belize (r = .089, p = .047). This relationship indicates that news from friends and relatives living elsewhere makes Belize look good by comparison.

No significant correlations were found between national identity and the media dependency variables, the lifestyle opportunity variables, or the variables measuring how much media and interpersonal sources would be missed if they were not available. However, a regression equation based on data obtained by converting media use into ratios of Belizean and foreign media exposure indicated that both radio and television dependencies could predict national identity. Those most likely to miss radio were expected to score highest on Belizean national identity, while those most dependent on television were expected to record lower national identity scores.

This is not to say that reading Belize magazines or depending on radio information--which probably originates

from Radio Belize--creates more positive evaluations of Belize as a country. The expectation that dependency on television will predict a small variance in national identity scores also does not mean that television increases "global identity" at the expense of national identity (See Table 17).

Young people who are proudest of their country also are most likely to seek out and depend on media that reinforce their opinions of Belize as a good place to live. Those who are most curious about the world outside Belize also are most likely to use television as an information source, especially when the relatively small amount of global information on Belize radio is taken into account. No claims of a causal relationship between media use and a stronger sense of national identity can be made from these data.

Two analyses using multiple linear regression found that the main predictor of a positive Belizean national identity among secondary school students is a feeling that life in Belize is better than life in the United States (beta = .217, Table 21; beta =.272, Table 22). The final regression equation listed two media variables, the amount radio would be missed, and the degree of television dependency (See Table 22). Together, the two media variables in the regression model explained about 9% of the variance in national identity index scores.

Like many other studies that have examined associations between U.S. media use and media influences among foreign audiences, this research confirmed previous evidence of "a small but significant impact" (Ware & Dupagne, 1995, p. 951). This research examined exposure to and dependency on U.S., Mexican, and local media by a young audience in Belize. Mass media can contribute to national identity, but in this research media use and dependency were very limited forces in national identity.

Regression analysis showed that individual comparisons between life in Belize and the United States best predicted national identity measures. Also, females in the sample were more likely than males to record higher national identity scores on some items. Ethnicity, age, and geographic location did not predict any broad set of positive or negative feelings about life in Belize.

The basic research question was whether exposure to and dependency on Belize media were related to feelings of national identity. The regression models answered this question and its corollary, whether foreign media was correlated with national identity. The regression models showed that Belize magazine exposure correlated positively with national identity, while foreign newspaper exposure showed a negative correlation.

The amount radio would be missed if it was not available correlated positively with national identity,

while television dependency correlated negatively. Those most dependent on television also were most likely to report weak identities with Belize.

CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

The main question explored by this research was whether exposure to and dependency on mass media in Belize would be associated with feelings of national identity among young people. The research question drew on media dependency theory, which has emphasized the individual's desire for social understanding based on the relevance and utility of messages in the media--message characteristics that are influenced by interpersonal networks (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984). Relevance and utility issues seemed especially appropriate in Belize, where satellite-imported television from the United States may encourage young people to seek job and educational opportunities outside their country.

The research findings were based on correlations between media exposure and dependency--the independent variables--and national identity measures, which were combined into a single dependent variable, the "national identity index." One of the key relationships studied involved television. Because United States television and national independence from Great Britain arrived in the same year, 1981, the first generation of true "Belizeans" also

became the first "television generation" in Belize. This research explored those two relationships by examining correlations between television exposure and dependency and measurements of national identity.

Great Britain's last colony in the Americas, where English is the official language, appeared to present an ideal situation for examining media--national identity relationships, a topic that has been addressed only rarely in the existing mass media literature. The research asked two essential questions: whether mass media were related to national identity, and whether differences in national identity existed between (1) heavy users of Belize media and (2) heavy users of foreign media, especially American television. Those who reported heavy use of and dependency on Belizean media were expected to report stronger identifications with Belize than those who spent most of their time with foreign media and depended on messages from outside Belize for information and entertainment.

Summary of Main Findings

Five main hypotheses were proposed; four testing media exposure and dependency relationships, and a fifth that tested the influence of interpersonal networks both within Belize and outside the country. These were divided into 11 sub-hypotheses examining media exposure relationships, media dependency relationships, interpersonal relationships, and desire for lifestyle opportunities outside Belize.

Hypotheses 1a and 1b proposed negative correlations between national identity measures and U.S. television (a) exposure and (b) dependency. These hypotheses tested the proposition that the popularity of U.S. television and the amount of time young Belizeans were exposed to the "mainstream" (Gerbner et al., 1980a, 1980b) of American culture, which this research recorded as four hours a day, would correlate negatively with Belizean identity. Perhaps the most obvious reason for the predicted negative correlation coefficient was that the time spent with U.S. television would reduce exposure to Belize media and the opportunity to develop dependency patterns with media from Belize.

Some researchers also have argued that media content from developed countries such as the United States encourages negative comparisons with life at home (Katz & Wedell, 1977; Nordenstreng & Schiller, 1979). Many Belizeans, including some of the nation's political leaders, have speculated that satellite-delivered U.S. television programs are painting a glamorous picture of life abroad that Belize cannot live up to (Brogdon, 1986; Wilk, 1994). Many of the young people who participated in this survey were well acquainted with the benefits of life outside Belize, but their images of a glamorous life abroad were tempered by communication with friends and relatives living in other countries.

As the data relating to Hypothesis 5c demonstrated, regular contact with friends and relatives living in other countries was positively and significantly associated in this research with more positive ratings of life in Belize. Snyder et al. (1991) wrote that foreign media may serve as surveillance mechanisms for people who are weighing emigration decisions. Negative information from a potential host country's mass media may be used as a basis for questioning people who are perceived as experts because they live in that country.

The experts in this research were friends and relatives living outside Belize. They have the credibility to confirm negative media information about the United States or other countries. The positive and significant correlation coefficient recorded for frequency of outside-the-country contacts and national identity hints at a two-step information process. Foreign media offer both positive and negative information about a country as an initial communications step, then foreign contacts act as expert advisers, answering questions and passing along judgments about the facts as they know them.

This research uncovered no convincing evidence that foreign television plays a direct role in national identity. The expected negative correlation between television exposure and national identity predicted by Hypothesis 1a was not found. The correlation coefficient was positive

instead of negative, and not significant. This finding seems to support the two-step information process already discussed, indicating that television may be positively, but weakly correlated with national identity. Television can present negative information from other countries that is then confirmed by foreign sources, making Belize look good by comparison.

In this research, television viewing had little to do with how audience members felt about the quality of life in their country. The correlation between television exposure and national identity was weak, and the relationship between television dependency and national identity recorded a very weak negative correlation coefficient. The negative television dependency--national identity relationship hypothesized by H1:(b) was not significant.

While other researchers have reported measurable effects of U.S. television exposure in English-speaking countries (e.g., Pingree & Hawkins, 1981), this research did not find significant television--national identity correlations in Belize. The present research clearly was not a study of "television effects." Correlations require only the establishment of a statistical relationship between variables.

The hypothesized television--national identity relationships found in this research were weak and not significant, so any discussion of foreign television's role

in national identity formation would be inappropriate if based on these data. In this research, no conclusions can be drawn about television effects on young people, even though such effects often are assumed by people in Belize simply because U.S. television is widely available and widely attended to.

Effects statements require evidence of covariance between presumed causes and effects, an establishment of time order with cause preceding effect, the ruling out of alternative explanations, and careful control of error variance (Shoemaker & McCombs, 1989, p. 154). The point of this discussion is that presumptions of television effects must be carefully supported, but often are not. This research found no significant correlations between the national identity measures used and television exposure and dependency.

Weaknesses in the research design may account for the lack of significant television--national identity correlations, but a more likely explanation is that mere television exposure often is not a very useful predictor of statistical variance, as is illustrated by this research. One review of television effects research that measured a wide variety of variables concluded that correlation coefficients typically fall below .15, and that television exposure "usually predicts less than 3% of the variance" (Potter, 1994, p. 16).

Researchers acquainted with television effects studies find few reasons to view television exposure measures as a way of explaining associations with many cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral measures (McLeod & McDonald, 1985). Media dependency theory also clearly states that it does not share the "mass society" idea that isolated individuals are affected by powerful media forces (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p. 308). The present research suggests that the measures of national identity used in this study may be added to the list of variables to which television exposure is related poorly or not at all.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b, predicting a positive correlation between national identity and Belize newspaper exposure and dependency also were not supported. The positive relationship between exposure and national identity predicted by Hypothesis 2a was found, but it was very weak and not significant. The average reader's newspaper exposure in Belize is lower than in most developed countries because Belizean newspapers are weeklies rather than dailies. Daily publication would offer seven times as many opportunities to read the paper and learn about events around Belize, especially the political events the Belize papers focus on. Daily exposure to news about government events might strengthen identifications with political leaders and encourage more interest in national affairs.

Newspaper content is overwhelmingly local because Belize papers do not subscribe to international newswire services. Newspaper penetration also is extremely high in comparison to countries such as the United States, and national literacy is above 90% in Belize. *Amandala*, founded as a black power paper, reports the largest press run in a country where some papers keep such information secret. *Amandala* records a weekly distribution of 8,500 copies in a country of slightly more than 200,000 people, a penetration rate of roughly 4% (Willings Press Guide, 1994). A similar figure for the largest U.S. newspapers such as *The New York Times* or *USA Today* would mean a daily circulation of about 11 million copies, more than five times the present daily distribution of those papers.

The survey participants seemed interested in the nation's weekly newspapers. Only 11% said they did not read a paper during a typical month, but the lack of daily papers affects exposure. The readership mean of 3.7 times monthly indicates that young people read a newspaper almost every week, but reading only one of the half-dozen newspapers published weekly in Belize results in an exposure level so low that it can be expected to have little influence on national identity.

Low newspaper exposure probably contributes to low dependency on newspapers. H2:(b) predicting a positive relationship between newspaper dependency and national

identity found a positive, but weak, correlation that was not significant. For Hypotheses 2a and 2b, both newspaper exposure and dependency measures recorded weak correlations with national identity.

Previous research in the United States indicates that newspaper use for public affairs information can be an important variable in the political socialization process for junior and senior high school students (Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970), but the American students surveyed had much greater access to newspapers than the Belizean students in this research. In addition, the political socialization variable measured in the United States may be only one element of national identity, or simply an initial step toward national identity formation. What seems more likely is that low newspaper exposure in Belize minimizes both newspaper dependency and the positive correlations between exposure/dependency and national identity.

The researcher also hypothesized that exposure to Belize magazines would be positively related to measures of national identity. H3:(a) predicting a positive correlation between national identity measures and Belize magazine readership was both positive and significant. Belize magazines recorded the strongest correlation with national identity of all the exposure and dependency variables

(r = .14, p = .003), consistent with the characterization by Potter (1994) that these coefficients typically are in the .15 range.

H3:(a), predicting a positive correlation between exposure to Belizean magazines and measures of national identity, was supported. The regression model to predict national identity offered additional support for the relationship between magazine reading and identity (See Table 21). The model indicated that Belize magazine exposure accounted for about 1% of the variance in national identity scores. While slight, the variance in national identity scores predicted by Belize magazine exposure ranked third in predictive value in the regression model, below (1) comparisons of life in Belize and the United States, and (2) respondent gender.

Few magazines focus on Belize. Those that do are published monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly; Belize has no weekly newsmagazines or general interest feature magazines. Magazines such as *Belize Today*, published by the government's Belize Information Service, and *Belize Review*, published in Belize City, maintain a focus on economic, development, agricultural and environmental issues around the country. Despite the somewhat dry, statistically-based focus, these magazines are read by some young people. One issue of *Belize Review* carried a letter from a student who

reported using the magazine's information in a school research paper on ecology.

The data in this research show a correlation between national identity and Belize magazine exposure, and the regression equation supports the predictive value of magazines in determining the strength of national identity. Despite these findings, there is no basis for asserting a causal relationship between Belize magazine reading and higher measures of national identity. It seems more likely that students who already hold strong identifications with Belize are more likely to read Belize magazines than those who hold weak national identifications. The small number of Belize magazines, low audience penetration, and somewhat dry content make it unlikely that magazine exposure increases national identity. The most likely explanation for the relationship is a predisposition to learn more about Belize because of a feeling of national identity.

The magazine dependency hypothesis, H3:(b), predicting a positive correlation between national identity measures and magazine dependency was not supported. The relationship recorded was positive rather than negative, and not significant. Infrequent publication of magazines precludes the kind of habitual reading that might lead to strong dependence on Belize magazines. Nearly a third of the respondents did not read a Belize magazine during a typical month. Dependency on magazines for entertainment or

neighborhood, town, Belize, and world news among survey participants was extremely low (See Table 12).

Hypothesis 4a, predicting a positive correlation between Belize radio exposure and national identity measures, was supported. The positive correlation was fairly weak, but approached significance (r = .072, p = .087). While listeners may hold some suspicions about government influence over the news heard on radio stations in Belize, radio has been considered a cherished "national institution" for many years (Oliveira, 1990, p. 120).

Radio can serve many important purposes in a developing country such as Belize, from performing information transfer and teaching functions (Lowry, 1970) to providing the people of a new nation with "the birth of nationality and the coming of modernity" (Martin-Barbero, 1988, p. 455). Because radio is so pervasive in Belize, it would be difficult to determine whether it helps strengthen national identity or is attended to by those who are more likely to identify strongly with Belize. Both relationships probably are valid, and practically all young people, whatever their feelings about national identity, listen to Belize radio stations.

A visitor can walk down a street in Belize City and hear Radio Belize pouring out of homes, passing cars, and hand held "boom boxes." The small number of radio stations in the country and a long tradition of listening to "the

voice of Belize" contribute to its continuing popularity. In addition, the station has made a greater effort to deliver local and national programming during the last few years (Lent, 1989).

Radio did not appear as a predictor of national identity in the regression model shown in Table 21. However, when Belize radio listening was entered in a regression equation as a ratio of *total* radio listening, radio dependency became a predictor of national identity, as shown in Table 22. The regression equation showed that reporting that radio would be missed if it was not available accounted for about 4% of the variance in national identity scores.

In this research, the relationship between national identity and Belize radio exposure can be characterized as positive, but low-key. Radio was the media source most depended on for information about events around Belize and in the survey participants' home towns, but H3: (b) predicting a positive correlation between radio dependency and national identity showed only a very weak positive correlation that was not significant.

Radio also was the communication medium respondents were most likely to miss; more than half said they would feel "lost" without radio. Although Belize radio stations emphasize news, local events, and public service announcements where information about Belise is the primary

focus, the high exposure and the feeling that listeners would be lost without radio did not translate into strong correlations with national identity measures.

One explanation for the relationships between national identity and radio exposure and dependency can be found in how the medium is used by a young audience. Radio is primarily an entertainment medium young people use to listen to music. Young people typically increase their radio use during adolescence while lowering television use; one American sample of adolescents listened to radio about five hours a day (Brown et al., 1990). The Belizean sample also averaged nearly five hours of radio exposure a day, and respondents said they preferred music over all other radio programming.

In Belize, the music on the radio includes large numbers of American songs, from Eddy Arnold classics to modern rap. The heavy airplay of American music may explain why 30% of respondents said the United States had the best radio programs. American records played on Radio Belize give the "voice of Belize" a somewhat American sound that may seem Belizean because it is so common. The Voice of America also operates a 50,000 watt relay station in Belize that broadcasts at 1530/1580 on the AM band.

Survey responses indicated that radio functions as a "background" medium for the young audience in Belize, just as it does for most other radio listeners. The Radio Belize

emphasis on local and national news and public affairs may contribute to national identity building, but most of its content is entertainment-based and radio was used as an entertainment medium by the students in this research. Only about one in five respondents preferred news over music as a radio program choice.

The final set of hypotheses that tested correlations between dependency and identity involved interpersonal sources of information, previously identified as a strong "pull" force that encouraged young people in Belize to seek opportunities outside their country (Snyder et al., 1991). Dependency theory suggests that where change in society increases, audience dependency on media information also increases (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). The survey respondents, mostly upper-level students in Belize secondary schools, faced major changes after graduation, when they would have to choose between additional education or a job search either at home or abroad.

In this research, survey participants who depended on interpersonal sources of information within Belize were expected to feel more "Belizean." Instead of the positive relationship between dependence on interpersonal sources in Belize and national identity predicted by H5:(a), the two variables showed a weak negative correlation that was not significant. The data reveal at least two possible explanations for this the weak negative relationship:

(1) survey participants reported very low dependence on others for information outside their neighborhood and their town, and (2) most participants reported that they would not miss their friends very much as a source of information (See Tables 12 & 13).

Respondents said they would miss radio, television, and newspapers more than their friends, who tied with magazines as the information source the students were least likely to "feel lost without." The literature on homogeneity of beliefs within groups in Belize suggests that perceived similarities are a function of internal information flow (Wells, 1980). In this survey sample, internal information flow appeared to be limited to local and neighborhood events. Respondents clearly stated that they preferred the mass media--particularly radio and television--for entertainment, and for information about events in Belize and the rest of the world. Friends and other people were not sources of information that were highly depended upon. Television was the main source of entertainment and information about the world outside Belize.

Dependency theory suggests that reliance on mass media increases in the absence of interpersonal sources of information (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984). It seems logical that spending more than 11 hours a day with radio and television, as the respondents reported, would be likely to lower interpersonal contact, decrease information

dependency on others, and reduce the amount that friends and other people are missed. Television viewing and radio listening can sometimes be an occasion for interpersonal contact, as in "co-viewing" or "co-listening," but people spending 11 hours a day with radio and television may have stopped missing the company of others. This sample of students appeared to have replaced much of the need for friends and other people with the companionship of mass media.

Interpersonal contacts with people outside Belize played a much more important role in national identity. Exposure to information from friends and relatives living outside the country was expected to be negatively related to national identity measures as predicted by H5:(b), but the correlation was both significant and positive. The hypothesis was based on past research that reported interpersonal contacts in other countries operated as a "pull" force on Belizeans considering emigration (Snyder et al., 1991). In this research, the positive correlation suggests that the pull may be balanced by information from friends and relatives that makes Belize look better in some areas of comparison with other countries. In general, young Belizeans believe they are happier than people in other countries and that they have the best culture.

Survey participants had many sources of information about life outside the borders of their country. More than

90% said they had relatives or friends living outside Belize. Many of these relatives and friends lived in the United States and contacted the students frequently. Nearly half had visited another country within the past year, and about three out of four had heard from someone living outside the country during the past month.

The significant positive correlation between national identity and contacts outside Belize suggests that some of the messages coming from friends and relatives overseas help improve assessments of life in Belize. For example, many Belizeans living in the United States have settled in Los Angeles, where street crime is prevalent and feelings toward immigrants are becoming more negative. As Snyder et al. (1991) speculated, exposure to negative news reports from other countries may lead young people in Belize to ask their interpersonal contacts for confirmation of negative reports. Friends and relatives living in Los Angeles, for example, are likely to confirm media reports of violence, racial prejudice or problems with unemployment and underemployment.

Data from the respondents indicated they perceive some problems with life in the United States, perhaps because of their average of four hours of daily U.S. television viewing. Respondents were more than nine times as likely to report that people in Belize were happiest in comparison to the United States, their most popular overseas destination for college, jobs, or permanent residence. They were six

times as likely to answer that Belize was the best country to live in when compared to the United States. These data suggest that mass media, combined with interpersonal contacts in other countries, can influence young people in Belize to take a more positive view of their country.

Survey responses indicate that young Belizeans would like to enjoy some of the lifestyle benefits of countries they hear about from others or learn about through the media. A weak correlation approaching significance offered limited support for H5:(c), predicting that desire for lifestyle opportunities outside Belize would be negatively related to national identity measures. The correlation examined desires for college, a job, or permanent residence outside Belize. Respondents overwhelmingly preferred the United States for college and jobs, but only about one in four was willing to live permanently in the U.S.

T-tests for independent samples examined differences in national identity means by comparing those who wanted to go abroad in search of lifestyle opportunities and those who preferred to stay in Belize. A lack of significant differences in national identity measures between those who would like to go elsewhere and those who preferred to stay in Belize indicates that national identity is not significantly affected by the desire to seek jobs, an education, or even permanent residence elsewhere. While respondents clearly felt that universities and jobs were

better in the United States, they also maintained feelings that life in Belize had some distinct advantages.

The weak negative correlation between national identity and desire for foreign lifestyle opportunities indicates a balancing relationship between being proud of Belize and realizing its shortcomings. Extensive media use and a wide network of outside contacts seem to have given the survey respondents a very good grasp of their country and their world. The finding that the national identity--lifestyle opportunity relationship approached significance illustrates the dichotomy between the pull of outside opportunities and the pull of positive feelings for Belize.

Belize mass media also have some influence over feelings of national identification. Economic and development information published in the nationally oriented magazines of Belize and the heavily Belizean focus of government-supported radio stations may strengthen national identity just enough to operate as an effective counterweight to the pull of developed countries. It is clear that Belize radio and magazines offer a significant amount of positive information about Belize.

Young people who feel positively about their country are more likely to seek out information that reinforces their feelings. Significant and positive correlations between national identity measures and Belize magazine exposure, and a relationship approaching significance for

national identity and radio exposure support this conclusion. The influence of Belize mass media exists, but it showed weak statistical correlations with national identity in this research.

Implications of the Findings

The present research indicates that exposure to Belize magazines and radio, which both include large amounts of government-supplied information, correlates with more positive feelings of national identity. The general weakness of the correlations and the failure to find a wide range of associations between media use and national identity emphasizes the intervening variables that modify any "magic bullet" media influences (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989, p. 164).

If the government of Belize attempted to build national identity based on these research findings, it might beef up spending on magazines and radio, and perhaps even gamble on returning to television broadcasting to increase feelings of Belizean unity and loyalty. Government-supplied information broadcast by Belize radio stations and carried in government publications such as the magazine *Belize Today* may be filling a need for information about national affairs that other media do not meet.

Using the media to build national identity also might be a government strategy that would fail to pay off. Although this research indicates a positive and significant

correlation between national identity and Belize magazine reading, and a somewhat weaker relationship for national identity and radio use, there is no reason to claim that more government spending on magazines and radio would result in higher reported measures on a "national identity index" in the coming years.

The reason for a cautious attitude toward building national identity through government-supplied mass media information is that government "public information" efforts, however noble, can become discredited by citizens and result in the opposite effect intended. In the United States, the Creel Committee's charge to exploit the communication industry to gain public support for America's entry into World War I created widespread public awareness of the word "propaganda" and gave it a permanent negative connotation in the minds of most Americans (Dizard, 1961, p. 31). Today, most libertarian governments limit their public diplomacy initiatives to overseas audiences, allowing their own citizens to make choices on public issues based on information provided by privately owned media outlets (Malone, 1988).

Governments around the world have sought to control mass media because of the perceived power of communication to affect national loyalties. The tendency toward government control is especially prevalent in developing countries, and particularly for the broadcast media. In

many parts of the world such as China, the Middle Eastern countries, and Africa, the tradition of government ownership or control of the electronic media is an old practice that only now is beginning to change (Martin, 1991; Ogan, 1991).

The situation is different in Belize, where radio changed in the 1960s from a government-operated service to a semi-commercial operation supervised by the Broadcasting Corporation of Belize (BCB). Today, Radio Belize is no longer a monopoly, which may have increased its credibility now that listeners can compare the BCB service with a handful of competing stations. Survey respondents reported using national radio stations for news about their country, just as they use television for news about the world.

The correlation between radio use and national identity that was found among the young people of Belize highlights the kind of relationship that has encouraged the leaders of many developing countries to maintain tight control over radio and television broadcasting. In the case of Belize, the rather weak positive associations between radio listening and national identity exist without government controls. In a libertarian society such as Belize, with liberal regulatory policies and broad public access to media from outside the country, even a slightly pro-government "public information" approach to radio broadcasting could be expected to lower message credibility and drive listeners to other stations. A loss of credibility from a government

"public information" broadcasting campaign would be even more likely now that Radio Belize is faced with private competition.

As for magazines, which showed a positive and significant correlation with national identity, the government of Belize probably can add little more to its efforts to inform the public about the country's positive attributes and its economic and developmental progress. The government's Belize Information Service publishes *Belize Today*, distributed free of charge to anyone who signs up for a subscription. A spokesman said most copies of *Belize Today* are mailed to foreign journalists.

The Belize Information Service also supplies the nation's newspapers with economic and technical information, government statements, and reports from government agencies. The same service is provided to foreign journalists and to foreign magazines covering Belize. For example, most issues of *Belize Currents*, published by Americans in Memphis, Tennessee, are filled with information from the government of Belize and the U.S. Embassy in Belize. Other government magazines would compete with the existing *Belize Today* at a greater cost to the Belize Information Service.

The libertarian media climate in Belize also discourages additional investment in television, which appears at first glance as another avenue for national identity building through the mass media. As outlined in

Chapter 2, the Belizean government did not launch its own national television service before the arrival of U.S. television because of predicted high costs that were estimated at more than $1 million. The government also failed to restrict the importation of U.S. television programming.

Now that Belizeans have access to a large number of imported cable channels and several Belizean channels, government television broadcasting would face very strong competition. Two privately owned Belize television stations provide popular nightly newscasts, and the government's foray into television news did not succeed. A spokesman for the Broadcasting Corporation of Belize said Channel 3, which once provided a BCB-produced evening television newscast, suspended operations in 1994 because of equipment and funding problems and had no immediate plans to return to the air (T. Jeffries, personal communication, June 10, 1994). With privately owned Belizean television channels enjoying popularity and planning to expand their audience reach, any national identity building by television probably will not be the work of the Belizean government in the foreseeable future.

Conclusion

Researchers who seek to measure relationships between media exposure, use, reliance, and dependency expect few if any dramatic findings; such is the case with this research.

The history of media effects studies chronicles cause and effect relationships stated with caution, and correlation studies that offer conclusions perhaps more reliable than those reached by effects studies. One review of 17 television effects studies found that the reported magnitude of media-source relationships depended heavily on the type of dependent measure used (Ware & Dupagne, 1994). The findings of this research also depend heavily on the dependent variable, the national identity index. Changing the elements of the index can be expected to change the correlations based on that index.

This research clearly is not an effects study. Research on interactions between media exposure and dependency and the dependent variable of national identity is very sparse, so there are few specific research findings with which to compare conclusions. In Canada, researchers using a different theoretical approach and a different set of measures found that Canadian young people who watched more U.S. television were more likely to perceive themselves as Americans (Barnett & McPhail, 1980). The same conclusion about American television and young people in Belize is not possible based on the data reported here.

Interactions between national identity measures and mass media such as magazines, radio, and television in developing nations are not clearly understood. This research was designed to fit the purposes of population

description, explanation, and exploration. National identity, a psychological consciousness of commonality with other people, develops from an unknown number of sources over an indeterminate period of time (Bloom, 1990; Constantino, 1978). Mass media, often studied as a source of political socialization, political decision-making, party allegiances and national development (Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Weaver & Drew, 1995), rarely have been examined as a source of national identity, the underlying base for political behavior (e.g., Barnett & McPhail, 1980).

A significant amount of literature describes the role of institutions such as national and local governments, schools, families, churches, and social organizations in the formation of national identity (Almond & Verba, 1963, 1980; Bloom, 1990; Ichilov, 1990). Mass media also provide important information that socializes citizens to their role in development of a newly formed nation. As this research indicates, at least some mass media use is associated with national identity, although the relationship is not a particularly strong one.

The data from this research suggest that government influence on media might play a small role in building identification with a new nation, even in a libertarian media climate like that of Belize where government control of mass media is quite limited. This research also has

demonstrated some relationships between mass media and measures of national identity by creating a national identity index that was internally consistent.

Another point that is strongly suggested here is that mass media also may have negative effects on national identity. The students in this research seemed to have a strong identity with their country, but a rather weak sense of identity with its government. Perhaps as a result of their reported seven hours of daily television use, they also seemed to believe in television's ability to address societal problems. Their cynicism about government was reflected in an overwhelming belief that Belize was the best country to live in, even though less than one-third of the respondents thought they enjoyed the best government. The cynicism also extended to other people and to the students' view of Belizean society. Less than half of the survey respondents believed Belizeans were the most honest people, and many said no one was honest.

Descriptions of how they would portray everyday Belizean life in a self-produced television program indicated a negative view of society and a preoccupation with perceived societal problems. In describing the television shows they would create in Belize, the most common topics outlined by young people were problems with drugs, gangs, teenage pregnancy, child abuse and alcoholism, problems that did not appear to be widespread according to

discussions with teachers around the country. Such problems were reported in Belize media, but did not seem a threat to Belizean society in 1995. One mission of the news media is to report the unusual; in Belize, the societal problems perceived by the students and sometimes reported in the media were news *because* they were unusual, not because they were widespread.

Societal problems were the focus of many American television news reports and television talk shows available in Belize. Young people who see American adolescents talk about drugs, gangs, and teenage pregnancy may see television as a way of warning their peers about such problems before America's social ills reach Belize. The 28% of survey participants who said they strongly identified themselves as part of a global society may believe that one country's problems cannot be isolated from neighboring regions.

A much smaller number of students said they would emphasize topics such as Belizean culture or the everyday lives of teenagers if they were asked to write a television show. These self-reported world views provided a look at topics young people said they would share with their peers through the media, but the view from Belize was gloomy. The cynicism about other people, society, and government extended to the country's environment, widely praised by tourism campaigns that advertise Belize as a "natural

paradise." Despite this praise, less than half the students thought their country had the cleanest environment.

Perhaps the students' reported feelings about government, the honesty of others, their nation's environment, and their country's societal problems betray a colonial mentality, in which a formerly colonized people have been taught that they are second-class citizens. Perhaps, as some Americans might suggest, a lifetime of U.S. television has created a cynical mindset that frames the long term challenges of life in a developing country into problem-solution capsules where quick fixes are found at the end of a half-hour show. If either of these scenarios is accurate, the job of nation-building in Belize is far from over, and this research suggests the mass media can offer little help.

Future Research

One of the accomplishments of this research was the development of a "national identity index." Future researchers who explore the role of mass media in national identity should take a very critical look at the national identity index that is described here, and the definitions of nationality and personal identity. The major problem of this research was an examination of the relationships between media and national identity. The definition of national identity and its operationalization obviously are very critical to the data presented in this research.

Changing the definition of national identity in future research can be expected to change the research findings.

As past reviews of communication studies clearly indicate, the magnitude of relationships that have been reported between media and audiences have depended very heavily on the dependent measures that were used (Ware & Dupagne, 1994). For example, some questionnaire items that Skinner (1984, p. 99) described as measures of "nation appreciation" or "nation appeal" in a study of media in Trinidad and Tobago have been included in this research as measures of national identity. What Bloom (1990, p. 18) referred to as "national character," or a set of mores and political norms, has been included in the definition of national identity used in this research.

The concept of patriotism also is included in the measures of national identity used in this research (Appendix C, Q37-49). Respondents were asked which country had the best government and which country was the "best" to live in. Responses to these questions are measures of patriotism. The original meaning of patriotism among the ancient Greeks was derived from the word *patris* or "fatherland." A patriot was a citizen with a strong love of country. The same concept has been applied to Belize.

Future researchers may choose to add additional measures of patriotism to an index of national identity. For example, young people could be asked if they have voted

or intend to vote when they get older, if they are would accept a government job, serve in national defense forces, go to war to protect or defend their country, or be willing to die for their country. These items might define national identity more clearly than those included in the index used in this research.

As is often the case in a new and relatively unexplored research area, the problems of conceptualization and operationalization provide major challenges. As operationalized here, the national identity index showed low correlations with media exposure and dependency. The same relationships might prevail no matter how national identity is defined. On the other hand, a more "patriotic" definition of national identity might yield different results. Media exposure measures are fairly standard in communications research, but future researchers should continue to refine definitions of national identity and media dependency.

It seems difficult to believe that the media play no role in the feelings and motivations of citizens in what was once the Soviet Union, Croatia, Northern Ireland, Kurdestan, Sri Lanka, Palestine, and Catalonia, to name only a few conflicts that involve national identity. Dozens of new nations have been formed since the end of World War II. Some nations have disintegrated since 1945 because of nationalistic feelings, as in the case of the former Soviet

Union, Yugoslavia, or Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, East and West Germany have become one, partly because of nationalistic feelings, and partly--some would say--because West German television portrayed a better lifestyle to the residents of East Germany.

As resurgent conflicts involving nationalism come to the surface around the world, the connection between media use and national identity becomes a more important research area. Perhaps national identity is born in the blood or built from the land itself; perhaps it is a feeling that no one has the ability to change. On the other hand, believing that national identity is unaffected by societal forces would mean denying much of what is known about learning theory and political socialization.

The feelings the Greeks knew as *patris*--identity with the fatherland--play an important role in the political map of the world in the 1990s. Research into the role of media in defining national identity addresses one of the central questions of mass communication: whether media are a force for unity in a "global village" or a 500-channel labyrinth that helps divide societies into smaller and smaller psychological communities.

APPENDIX A
PERMISSION FORM

I am a graduate student in journalism at the University of Florida in the United States. As part of my journalism research, I would like to gather information on young people's media use in Belize. I would like to ask some questions about young people's time spent watching television and listening to radio, and about their opinions on life in Belize. The test takes most students about 20 or 25 minutes.

Most of the students will answer these questions during a free period during the day, or perhaps as part of a class. I will hand out questionnaires for the students to fill out. Either myself or a teacher will ask the students to take a paper and pencil and fill out their answers and opinions.

The students do not write their names on the questionnaire. Their answers are anonymous. This project is done only for research, and will not be used for commercial gain. Individual answers are all confidential. No money is paid to the students for answering.

The questionnaire will be given under the supervision of school officials. No student has to participate. Any student is free not to answer any or all of the questions articipation is entirely voluntary. Participation or

non-participation will not affect the child's grade(s). I will visit the school this week to hand out the questionnaires. Please let your child know about this and advise him or her that it is all right to answer the questions if they choose to do so.

If you have questions, please write to my address in the United States: Larry Elliott, 321 SE 3rd Street, H-18, Gainesville, Florida, 32601.

- -

(PLEASE TEAR THIS PART OFF AND RETURN IT TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL)

I have read and I understand the procedure described above. I agree to allow my child, _____ to participate in Larry Elliott's study, "Opinions from Belize." I have received a description of what this study is about.

SIGNATURES:

_____(Parent)

_____(2nd Parent or Witness

_____date

Approved for use through November 16, 1995

APPENDIX B
STUDENT ASSENT SCRIPT

TODAY THOSE OF YOU WHO WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN A PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY WILL ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS. THESE QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT YOUR USE OF RADIO AND TELEVISION, NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES, AND SOME OTHER OPINIONS YOU HAVE ABOUT LIFE IN BELIZE.

NO ONE HAS TO ANSWER ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS. YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY. I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOUR PARENTS TOLD YOU I WOULD BE HERE TODAY TO GIVE THE SURVEY. IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE, JUST TURN IN THE FORM BLANK. THANK YOU.

APPENDIX C
QUESTIONNAIRE

Opinions from Belize

We would like to ask you some questions about your every day life. There are no good or bad answers, just honest opinions. Everyone will give different answers. Please answer every question. If you don't understand a question, please raise your hand for help. Thank you for your cooperation!

1. How old are you? Age_____

2. What is your sex? (1)____male (2)____female

3. Is there a radio in your house? (1)____yes (2)____no

4. Is there a television in your house? (1)____yes (2)____no

5. Do you have cable television in your house? (1)____yes (2)____no

6. How many different TV channels can you watch at your house?_____

7. In a typical month, how many times do you read a newspaper from Belize? (1)____none (2)____once (3)____twice (4)____three times (5)____four times (6)____more than four times

8. In a typical month, how many times do you read a newspaper From another country? (1)____none (2)____once (3)____twice (4)____three times (5)____four times (6)____more than four times

9. In a typical month, how many times do you read a magazine from Belize? (1)____none (2)____once (3)____twice (4)____three times (5)____four times (6)____more than four times

10. In a typical month, how many times do you read a magazine from another country? (1)____none (2)____once (3)____twice (4)____three times (5)____four times (6)____more than four times

11. How many hours each day do you listen to radio from Belize?_____hours a day.

12. How many hours each day do you listen to radio from other countries?_____hours a day.

13. How many hours each day do you watch television programs made in Belize?_____hours a day

14. How many hours each day do you watch television programs made in Mexico?_____hours a day.

15. How many hours each day do you watch television programs made in the U.S.A.?_____hours a day.

16. What part of the daily radio schedule in Belize interests you most? (check only one)
(1)____weather (2)____music (3)____news
(4)____religion programs (5)____talk shows
(6)____public service messages (7)____other (name the program)_____

17. How many days each week do you listen to news on the radio? (circle one answer)
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (every day)

18. What kind of news on the radio interests you most? (check one)
(1)_____news about Belize (2)_____news about other countries in Central America (3)_____news about the world outside Central America

19. What kind of news on television interests you most? (check one)
(1)_____news about Belize (2)_____news about other countries in Central America (3)_____news about the world outside Central America

20. How many days each week do you watch television news from Mexico?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (every day)

21. How many days each week do you watch television news from the United States?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (every day)

22. Of all television programs, what type interests you most? (check only one)
(1)_____cartoons (2)_____novelas (3)_____news
(4)_____movies (5)_____sports (6)_____comedies
(7)_____soap operas (8)_____other? (name it)_____

23. When you want to learn about events in your neighborhood, do you: (1)___ ask other people (2)____read newspapers (3)____read magazines (4)____listen to radio (5)_____watch TV

24. When you want to learn about events in your town, do you: (1)____ask other people (2)____read newspapers (3)____read magazines (4)____listen to radio (5)____watch TV

25. When you want to learn about events around Belize, do you: (1)_____ask other people (2)____read newspapers (3)____read magazines (4)____listen to radio (5)____watch TV

26. When you want to learn about events in the world, do you: (1)____ask other people (2)____read newspapers (3)____read magazines (4)____listen to radio (5)____watch TV

27. When you just want entertainment, which is the best source? (1)____other people (2)____newspapers (3)_____magazines (4)____radio (5)____TV

28. If you didn't hear from your friends for a long time, how would you feel? (1)___lost without them (2)___I would miss them, but get along without them (3)____I would not miss them

29. If you weren't able to read a newspaper for a long time, how would you feel? (1)____Lost without it (2)_____Miss it, but get along without it (3)_____I would not miss it.

30. If you weren't able to read any magazines for a long time, how would you feel? (1)____Lost without them (2)_____Miss them, but get along without them (3)_____I would not miss them

31. If you couldn't listen to radio for a long time, how would you feel? (1)____Lost without it (2)_____I would miss it, but get along without it (3)_____I would not miss it.

32. If you couldn't watch television for a long time, how would you feel? (1)___Lost without it (2)_____I would miss it, but get along without it (3)_____I would not miss it

33. Compared with Guatemala, life in Belize is: (1)___worse (2)___about the same (3)____better

34. Compared with Honduras, life in Belize is: (1)___worse (2)___about the same (3)____better

35. Compared with Mexico, life in Belize is: (1)___worse (2)___about the same (3)___better

36. Compared with the U.S.A., life in Belize is: (1)___worse (2)___about the same (3)___better

37. Of all countries, people in _____have the best government.

38. Of all countries, people in _____have the best culture.

39. Of all countries, people in _____have the best schools.

40. Of all countries, people in _____have the best jobs.

41. Of all countries, people in _____are the most honest.

42. Of all countries, people in _____are the happiest.

43. Of all countries, people in _____are the richest.

44. Of all countries, people in _____have the cleanest environment.

45. Of all countries, people in _____care most about their family.

46. Of all countries, people in _____have the best country to live in.

47. Of all countries, people in _____are the most like me.

48. Of all countries, people in _____have the best television programs.

49. Of all countries, people in _____have the best radio programs.

50. Do you have relatives or friends who live outside Belize? (1)____yes (2)____no

51. If you have relatives or friends living outside Belize, how many times each month do you hear from them by telephone or a letter?
(circle one answer) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

52. During the last year, have you visited someone in another country? (1)_____yes (2)____no

53. How many times did you visit Guatemala in the last year?
0 1 2 3 4 ____other

54. How many times did you visit Mexico in the last year? 0
1 2 3 4 ____other

55. How many times did you visit Honduras in the last year?
0 1 2 3 4 _____other

56. How many times did you visit the United States in the last year? 0 1 2 3 4 ___other

57. What other countries have you visited in the last year?
_____
(if you did not visit any countries in the last year, please put "none")

58. How much are you interested in visiting another country?
(1)_____I'm not interested (2)_____not sure/don't know
(3)____I'm very interested

59. If you would like to visit another country, which one would it be? _____

60. Would you like to attend a university in another country? (1)____yes (2)____no

61. If you would like to attend a university in another country, which country would you most like to go to?
_____

62. Would you like to get a job in another country?
(1)____yes (2)____no

63. If you would like to get a job in another country, which country would you like most to work in?
_____

64. Would you like to move to another country to live permanently? (1)____yes (2)____no

65. If you would like to live in another country, which country would you like most to live in? _____

66. How do you classify yourself? (1)_____Creole
(2)_____Mestizo (3)_____Mays (4)_____Garifuna
(5)_____Mennonite (6)____East Indian (7)____Chinese
(8)____Arab (9)____other (please specify)_____

67. On a scale of 1 to 10, how strongly do you identify with your country? (circle one number)
("I don't feel Belizean" = 1)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
("I feel very Belizean" = 10)

68. On a scale of 1 to 10, how strongly do you identify with your country compared to the rest of the world? (circle one number)
("I can only be Belizean"= 1)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
("I am part of a global society" = 10)

69. Which country's television programs tell you the <u>most</u> about people like yourself? (1)____Guatemala
(2)____Honduras (3)____Mexico (4)____U.S.A.
(5)____Belize (6)_____other (name the country_____

70. Which country's television programs show people who are the <u>most</u> like you? (1)____Guatemala (2)____Honduras
(3)____Mexico (4)____U.S.A. (5)____Belize
(6)_____other (name the country)_____

71. When it comes to television programs <u>made in Belize</u>, would you like to see: (1)_____more about Belize
(2)_____about the same amount
(3)_____less television about Belize

72. Of the shows you watch on television, would you like to see (1)____more shows about the United States
(2)_____about the same amount (3)_____fewer shows about the United States

73. If you were in charge of television in Belize, what would you do to make it more interesting for young people to watch?

_____

_____

74. If <u>you</u> wrote a television show about young people in Belize, what would <u>your show</u> be about?

_____

_____

Please write in the names of your 3 favorite TV shows or programs in the spaces below; list your favorite show first.

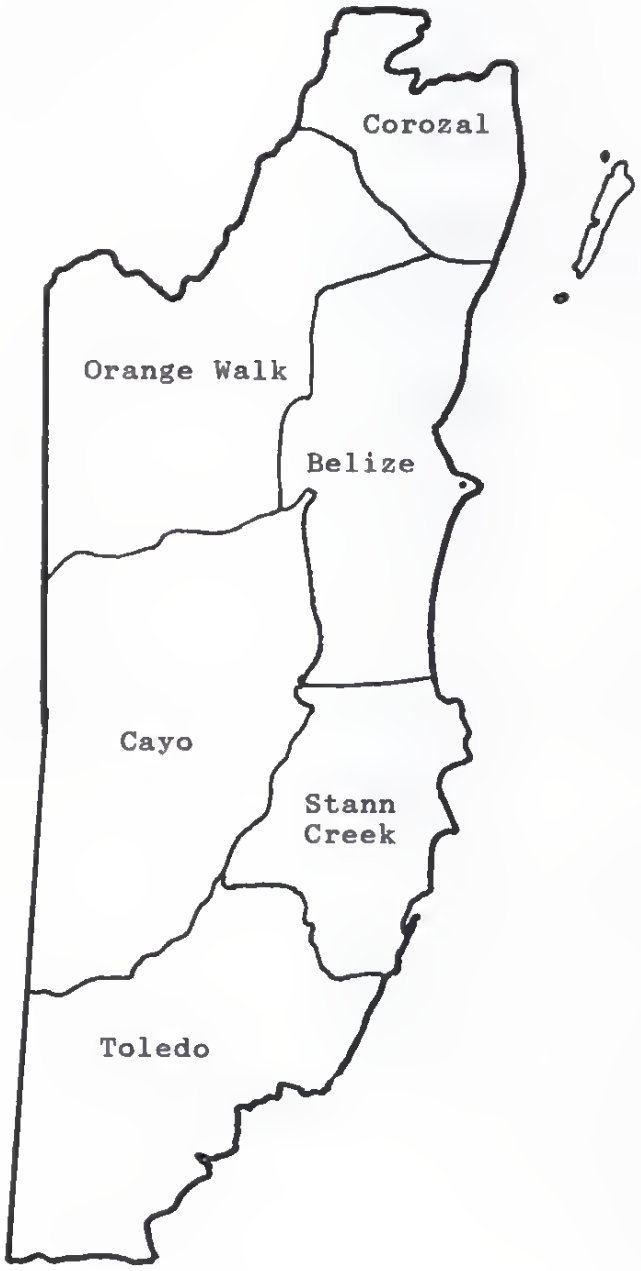
75. _____

76. _____

77. _____

Thank you for your help!

APPENDIX D
MAP OF BELIZE



APPENDIX E
MAP OF CENTRAL AMERICA

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